

Your Worship:

The Greely Community Association (GCA) Transportation Committee earlier submitted a brief to the City of Ottawa Mayor and Council regarding the LRT project, for which we provided our conditional support.

The attached letter updates our position on this project, in view of the fact that it is now under review. In summary we still support the project, but if Council elects to vary the Siemens contract at all, we believe that the Friends-of-the-O-Train proposal should be seriously considered, in particular extension of the O-Train to at least Earl Armstrong Road, possibly also to Manotick Station.

The letter also addresses other transportation issues which are of major concern to the residents of the Greely area.

Best regards

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Transportation Committee

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December 6, 2006

Mr. Larry O'Brien
Mayor
City of Ottawa

(By E-Mail)

Your Worship:

Purpose

I am writing to you on behalf of the Greely Community Association (GCA) to provide input with respect to a range of transportation issues, which are of concern to us. This letter is to seek a meeting with you, Councillor Doug Smith and representatives of our Transportation Committee to discuss various transportation issues which are of immediate concern to us.

About the Greely Community Association

The Greely Community Association (GCA) is a not-for-profit organization created to advance community interests and improve the quality of life for the people of Greely. Our members are local residents and dedicated volunteers who share an interest in their community. The GCA shares information and provides support to the Greely community in several ways:

- We provide a forum for discussion of issues, build consensus and bring conclusions to the public attention
- We cooperate with and support other community organizations in the pursuit of common interests
- We keep the community informed about activities and opportunities that may be of benefit or interest to Greely residents
- We initiate social, educational, recreational and other new programs as needs present themselves in our community

There are approximately 2500 homes in Greely, including those either completed or at this time under construction.

Since our Transportation Committee was formed in June of this year we have been active in addressing both tactical and strategic transportation issues. This has included formulating and presenting a brief regarding the LRT project, assessing local road conditions, meeting with senior City staff (whom we have recently invited to make a tour of specific roads in our area) and identifying the areas of most concern.

This letter is intended to enunciate for your consideration the various issues on which we have already begun a dialog with City staff since the summer. However, some of the issues set out below, are more properly the domain of Council, the Transportation Committee and the Rural / Agriculture Affairs Committee.

1. Light Rail Transit Project

During the past two years, members of the GCA have been monitoring developments related to light rail. On July 10, 2006 we made a submission to the Mayor and Councillors indicating that the GCA supports the implementation of a North-South LRT system, although we also agree with the Friends of the O Train (FOTOT) and Transport 2000 (T2000) that the current proposal requires considerable improvement to meet the projected requirements of the southern area of the City. For example, given projected growth, even in the area of the Village of Greely to say nothing of the adjoining areas, we expect that the LRT park-and-ride facilities as Leitrim (and Lester) will fill up very rapidly. We understand that the Leitrim facility will hold only approximately 1000 vehicles. We therefore believe that the following measures should be built into the LRT plan if it is proceeded with:

-expansion of the Leitrim and Lester park-and-ride facilities to at least double their currently projected sizes; and

-addition of a park-and-ride facility as close as possible to Greely (at a point along the east-west alignment of the rail line or else where it crosses Earl Armstrong Road) even if this requires further environmental assessment and indeed expropriation.

Also, we are not aware of any provisions being made for those who would wish to cycle to these facilities and take LRT from there.

We believe that many far-suburban and rural residents – if they choose to use transit at all – will prefer LRT to bus. We therefore believe that installation of an LRT line is a preferred alternative to a bus-based southern transit line, even one along the same alignment, in terms of its likely attractiveness to potential far-suburban and rural residents. It should also be pointed out that in a community vote Greely residents earlier rejected the extension of OC Transpo bus service into our community.

Whereas the City has limited experience in planning, building or operating an LRT system *on this scale* (the small existing diesel line is minor in comparison) we believe that every effort should be made to maximize the project's chance for success. We are very concerned about the claims made by T2000 (who are rail transit experts and have been studying the subject for more than 30 years) that the *City planners may in fact be "not putting rail's best foot forward"* and they are thereby reducing the probability of the ultimate success of the project.

See: <http://www.transport2000.ca>

In particular, we have these concerns:

-the City must fully resolve the downtown alignment issues BEFORE commencing construction of the project – the existing virtual reality Web demonstration on the City Web site is totally unconvincing with respect to how well light rail vehicles (LRV's) and buses will be able to intermingle with each other, not to mention other types of traffic in the downtown core – see: http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/lrt/experience/virtual_en.shtml; and

-if the City were to specify and select hybrid single- and multiple-unit electric/diesel-electric vehicles which could run on electricity (from overhead catenary) in the downtown and adjacent areas and then convert to diesel in the outlying areas the total infrastructure cost of the project could be greatly reduced – it is worth noting that relatively few cities have electrified LRT lines over the planned distance of our projected system unless the area they run through is of much higher density – saving money by installing less overhead catenary would permit the project to both buy more vehicles and also keep a larger contingency fund in case of cost over-runs.

The current plan will appropriate pristine rural land zoned recreational South of the airport for a maintenance yard, while ignoring the recommendations of the City's own consultants to utilize the existing rail yards between Walkley and Conroy Roads. (If this facility is too contaminated to be used as a rail yard, what hope is there for using it as anything else?) We therefore oppose the recommendation that the Bowesville Road site be used for a rail maintenance yard on the North-South Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line on top of existing green space. The GCA feels that a proposed sports park and soccer field complex is an environmentally sound plan for the site and is a more fitting use for the Bowesville location. We are deeply concerned over recent news that Council approved the Bowesville site for the rail maintenance yard and feel that it is not only an inappropriate use of this space, it does Ottawa residents a great disservice by denying them the opportunity to benefit from a badly needed and economically viable recreation facility.

We are of course also aware that Council may now decide to accept, vary or terminate the contract for the LRT project. **If Council decides to vary the existing LRT project we believe that the recently tendered FOTOT proposal (which is also supported by T2000) to limit electric LRT to a downtown east-west alignment and extend the existing O-Train service to at least Earl Armstrong Road – and possibly beyond – would be the most appropriate way to proceed.** In fact, we believe that some of the savings from reducing the scale of the electric LRT project should instead be used to extend this proposed service south to Mitch Owens and thence west to Manotick Station. An LRT station located there could readily serve all of Manotick, Rideau Forest and Greely.

What we would not like to see is the termination of the new LRT project and also the termination of the O-Train without a consequent major commitment to immediate road expansion, covering at least the areas discussed in Parts 3 and 4 below. Indeed, it is evident that the already-level committed development in the southern area will soon saturate the road system if something is not done.

>>> It must also be remembered that most of the residents of Ottawa's southern rural area are served by absolutely no lane-miles of freeway and by far fewer lane-miles of high-speed arterial than those of the western or eastern part of the city.

2. Requirement to Re-Order Transportation Priorities for Rural Areas

When we met recently with City transportation officials at 100 Constellation, they reminded us that their standing planning instructions are to give top priority to pedestrians, next to bicycles, then to transit and finally to motorists. We do not believe that this priority ordering is appropriate for the rural areas of Ottawa in general and particularly for Greely because for us the first three modes do not currently exist. The sprawling size and fragmented layout of our community dictate that roadways are critical and will remain the primary means of transportation for the immediate and foreseeable future (as reflected in a recent referendum which vetoed limited OC Transpo service to Greely). The *Greely Community Design Plan* (City of Ottawa, 2005), the *Village of Greely Land Use and Design Study* (Fotenn, 2004), and the *CAUSE Study* (Ontario Assoc. of Architects, 1999) all state emphatically that many of our main arterials require serious improvements incorporating safe pedestrian and cyclist mobility. For these reasons improved roadways remain our #1 priority, but the integration of the other three modes of transport into our village is still necessary and very desirable. **We therefore request that the Transportation Committee and the Rural/Agriculture Affairs Committee have this priority order explicitly**

altered when it comes to planning for far-suburban and rural areas. (While it may be appropriate for a high-density urban area, this priority order is not appropriate for a rural area.)

3. A Bronson Expressway

We are becoming increasingly concerned that we will face major traffic congestion problems in the southern area of the City as the entire southern area development proceeds. In this regard, we believe that work should commence *now* on planning a new major high-speed arterial called the 'Bronson Expressway' which would have the following components:

- broaden Bronson, by expropriation, from the Queensway to the Dunbar Bridge, thereby creating a six-lane high-speed expressway with limited (and signalled) access to selected major streets through the Glebe such as Carling Avenue + Glebe Avenue, Fifth Avenue and possibly one further street;

- widen the Airport Parkway to four lanes from Heron Road to Alert+Lester to eliminate the current southbound constriction at the narrowing point as well as the daily AM traffic jam when northbound traffic merges onto the road from Hunt Club; and

- widen Lester Road to four lanes from the Airport Parkway to Bank Street, thus serving both the new communities along Bank Street and also providing a high speed outlet to northbound traffic on Albion Road which desires to go eastbound to the Airport Parkway and then northbound from there to the central business district.

To our knowledge, the strip on either side of Bronson from the Queensway to the Dunbar Bridge includes no buildings of major historical significance so there would not be a heritage barrier to such expropriation. It should be added that our opposition to the currently proposed access restrictions to Bronson is due to the fact that they are intended to reduce traffic through the Glebe without reference to what the impact will be on the flow of traffic along Bronson. Our Bronson Expressway proposal would lead to a much higher northbound and southbound throughput on Bronson throughout the day. Creation of the Bronson Expressway would greatly expedite the flow of traffic from the central business district, and the Glebe, to the Airport, as well as any traffic from the Queensway which joins Bronson in a SB direction to go to the Airport.

>>> Some of the road improvements discussed above are already contained in the 20/20 plan, but we do not believe that the southern area can wait another 14 years for them to be completed. With or without the LRT project, they are going to be needed very soon.

4. An Ottawa Beltway

In our view, the City should also immediately engage with the Province of Ontario and the National Capital Commission to resume the earlier discussions of an Ottawa Beltway running from Orleans, through the southern area and thence on to Kanata. It is noteworthy that at this time the residents of the (rapidly growing) southern area are served by far fewer lane-miles of high-speed arterial road, and (except immediately adjacent to the 416) by absolutely no lane miles whatsoever of freeway.

5. List of Tactical Transportation Issues

We recently met with Mr. Michael Flainek and other senior City executives regarding a number of tactical issues (detailed in ANNEX A) which impact traffic flow and safety in our area. We would request that you review these issues with him and do whatever you can to assist us to address as many of these as possible during the 2007 construction season. These issues are based largely on input from members of our Committee, and the wider community. Some of them directly impact the safety of schoolchildren and we would respectfully suggest that these should be accorded the highest priority.

Request for Meeting

As indicated above, we would like to request a meeting to discuss the issues cited in this letter at your earliest convenience. You may also wish to invite Transportation officials to this meeting.

Best regards,

Dan Perley

CC: All Councillors

William Ney, President GCA
GCA Transportation Committee

Michael Flainek, Transportation
Greg Kent, Transportation
Kevin Grace, Transportation
Alain Gonthier, Transportation
Peter Steacy, Transportation
Karen Muir, Planning
Louise Sweet-Lindsay, Planning

ANNEX A – Greely Community Association - Tactical Transportation Issues

1. The most criticized road in the Greely area is Parkway Road between Stagecoach and Old Prescott. It is the main link between Greely West and Greely, it is very narrow and uneven, it has no shoulders, and the Fire hall is located on this road. Fire trucks have difficulty passing vehicles along this stretch and many motorists will speed ahead of the rigs seeking a safe shoulder to pull over. There are NO provisions for pedestrians or cyclists along this important link.
2. The Greely Elementary School Council has raised with the GCA the need to have cautionary school crossing signs, with flashing lights, installed on Parkway Road in front of the school. Also, opposite the school, there is a small parcel of land on the north side of the road, which could be paved and used as a safer drop-off area for those who are westbound (WB). The School Council has declared this to be a safety issue; we agree.
3. Re-alignment of the Parkway+Apple Orchard / Stagecoach intersection is required, possibly with installation of a traffic signal. We have witnessed a number of near-miss accidents at this offset intersection, particularly with motorists unfamiliar with the intersection. Many school buses use this intersection on their route to and from St. Mark HS via the back roads (Apple Orchard & Dozois)
4. It is our view that all of Apple Orchard Road, Old Prescott Road and Manotick Station Road are in need of significant upgrade. When we met recently with City of Ottawa officials at 100 Constellation we were advised that such upgrades are not in the immediate plan. We believe that upgrades to these roads should be definitely programmed for the 2007 construction season.
5. A left-turn lane should be provided at Mitch Owens EB to Bank Street NB because a large number of motorists seek to make this turn in the morning. Addition of a left-turn green arrow signal (advanced/extended turn signal aspect) would also be desirable at this location.
6. At the Dozois+Limebank / Mitch Owens Intersection (at St. Marks High school) we believe that left-turn lanes are needed for all four directions. There is a serious safety issue here, which the installations of crossing light buttons for the students (who wish to cross Mitch Owens to reach the hamburger stand) have not resolved. Also, consideration should be given to adding a bus-only entrance-exit serving Mitch Owens EB to the school property and bus turn-around just west of the intersection. Currently all school and local traffic are crowded onto Dozois Road.
7. During the morning and evening rush hours access from NB Manotick Station Road to WB Mitch Owns is extremely difficult and many cars dart out into traffic. We view the situation as being very unsafe and little better than a fatal accident waiting to happen. We would recommend traffic signals be installed at this intersection
8. We believe that Albion Road, north of Mitch Owens Road desperately needs to be resurfaced as far north as Leitrim. In some areas sagging shoulders cause vehicles to lurch and the countless lateral cracks give the impression that this is a concrete roadway.
9. Traffic signal interval synchronization for those SB on Bank Street from South Keys to Leitrim Road is at times exceedingly poor and it is often possible to experience a red signal aspect at several lights in succession. We believe these traffic lights require re-synchronization to take account of current traffic flow patterns and volumes.
10. A right turn lane should be provided from Lester EB to Albion SB, particularly while the no-through restriction exists at this intersection. One vehicle EB waiting for a green light to proceed through the intersection may prevent numerous others from turning right onto the empty Albion SB lane.
11. We also believe that the current no-through-traffic (NB and SB) restriction at Albion / Lester should be removed. Why were timed restrictions not implemented as a first trial?

12. A right turn lane should be provided from Mitch Owens EB to Stagecoach SB. Numerous vehicles pass on the left shoulder or cut through the private property during red lights at this tee intersection.

13. As pointed out in our LRT brief (a copy of which is available upon request) we believe that an LRT station should be constructed closer to Greely combined with a park-and-ride facility.

Links to it and many projects in and around Greely may be found at

<http://www.greelycommunity.org/currentaffairs.asp>

14. We believe there is a concern for traffic at Bank Street and Parkway; installing traffic lights will make this intersection much safer for all.