

**Analysis of Responses to  
'Questions, Questions, and More Questions  
About Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition'**

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# Analysis of Responses to 'Questions, Questions, and More Questions About Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition'

Barry Wellar\*

## 1. Background

The Report, *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition* ([transport2000.ca](http://transport2000.ca)) was written to ascertain the reasoning process behind two major features of the Ottawa's light rail transit (LRT) plan:

**Using the Western Parkway (which is under the authority of the National Capital Commission) for part of the LRT system west of downtown Ottawa; and,  
Traversing downtown Ottawa by underground tunnel or by surface.**

Four of the central decision shapers and decision makers in the process of defining, designing, financing, and implementing Ottawa's LRT plan are the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission (NCC), the Government of Canada, and the Province of Ontario. Accordingly, communications were sent to each of those bodies or agents of those bodies in the search for answers to the questions presented in the report, *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*.

For the record, it is noted that three months have passed since the *Questions, Questions, and More Questions* report was posted on the Transport 2000 Canada website. And, it was almost 12 months ago that questions were initially raised about the apparent lack of evidence to support opinions, claims, assertions, etc., regarding the Western Parkway as an LRT corridor west of downtown. And, it is further noted that over the past 12 months, the concerns raised in the *Questions, Questions, and More Questions* report, as well as in other materials, have been the subject of media and listserve attention/exposure.

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\* As Distinguished Research Fellow, Transport 2000 Canada, Dr. Barry Wellar writes on various topics that are pertinent to the Transport 2000 Canada mission to promote environmentally-sound transportation solutions. This report analyses institutional responses to questions about light rail transit plans in Ottawa, and discusses issues that are of interest to Transport 2000 Canada members, including sustainable transport best practices, public participation, decision processes, and research methodology. The report also includes several next steps to improve the quality and the documentation of Ottawa's LRT discourse.

And, it may also be useful to put a note on record for those who may have read the **Questions, Questions, and More Questions** report, and become perplexed about the seeming difficulty of obtaining answers in a timely manner from institutions. Indeed, I have already heard/seen comments of that nature, and while I have no way of correcting the institutional shortcoming, I may have a word of explanation/comfort for the reader.

It is my experience that there are two significant ways to interpret what might be perceived as a severe case of institutional foot-dragging, both of which have important messages for current and future analyses of the reasoning processes behind LRT decisions. .

.1. There are no evidence-based answers to the questions, and the powers-that-be are “making it up as they go along”, with heavy reliance on “anatomical sourcing” as the primary means of making decisions.

For readers unfamiliar with the methodology termed “anatomical sourcing”, a description is provided in the Transport Canada project report, ***Sampler of Commentaries on Methods and Techniques that Could be Used in Making Decisions about Identifying, Adopting, or Implementing Sustainable Transport Practices***. The report can be viewed online at: [wellarconsulting.com](http://wellarconsulting.com).

2. The powers-that-be are acquiring or have in hand the bases of answers to the questions, and they are doing their best to prepare complete, readily understood responses that are of A+ quality. As a result, like a fine wine the answers will improve with age (the amount of time taken to prepare the replies), and will be well worth the wait as long as they arrive in time to be factored into the deliberations at issue, which in this case are Ottawa’s LRT deliberations, 2009 edition.

If there are no answers to questions about the methods and techniques used in decision shaping or decision making, then both current and future researchers are served by having that state of affairs made clear and explicit.

That is, if there are no answers to questions about the reasoning procedures and processes behind LRT decisions in Ottawa, then there is no point in contemplating or attempting before-after, comparative, or other kinds of analytical studies since there is no methodological basis for the analyses.

On the other hand, however, if detailed information about the decision-making process is available, then Ottawa’s LRT policies, plans and programs can be subjected to all manner of analyses, including those of a comparative nature involving LRT policies, plans, and programs in other jurisdictions. And, to

emphasize a point made in the **Questions, Questions, and More Questions** report, a major benefit of documenting the methodological underpinning is that substantive analyses can be performed with confidence this year, next year, and fifty years from now.

For reasons of completeness and context, the questions about the downtown LRT section and the Western Parkway route are presented in section 2. And, consistent with previous criticisms about the seemingly widespread affliction of shallow thinking that seems to grip Ottawa city hall when complex issues are involved, there is another reason for putting the questions front-and-center on a repeated basis.

As I have commented on previous occasions, there appears to be consensus among citizens that many people at Ottawa city hall, and particularly elected officials, seemingly lack the inclination, and the skill, to construct information-seeking questions. And, as others have suggested, it could be something even more troubling, such as an inferiority complex factor, a bravado factor, or other character flaw. Whatever the reason, I am optimistic that repetition of the questions will have a remedial effect, and present and future area residents will reap the benefits of our municipal politicians not just asking questions, but asking questions with substance to them.

In sections 3, 4, 5, and 6, communications exchanged with agents of the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, the Government of Canada, and the Province of Ontario are presented, along with an analysis of the responses to questions that were received from each of the institutions. Any email communications sent to the agents of the City of Ottawa, the NCC or the federal and provincial governments that were not in the **Questions, Questions, and More Questions** report are presented *verbatim* in this report.

The reasons for using verbatim materials to create an accurate, historical record were outlined in the previous report, where it was noted that:

“...questions are still being asked in 2009 about transit-related questions that were asked or should have been asked 30 years ago. By extension, therefore, it is highly likely if not certain, that in 20, 30, 40, and 50 years or more, questions will also be asked about the questions involving LRT that were asked in 2009, and the answers received.”

As the reader is no doubt aware, if it is difficult in the present to obtain satisfactory explanations of methodological matters, then it is inevitable that the degree of difficulty of obtaining satisfactory explanations will increase over time. This form of information deterioration is due to multiple causes, chief among them being the departure of critical players, the loss of hard copy as well as

electronic documentation, and above all, memory loss among the participants, who still remain on duty, but do not remember who said or did what.

A critical value of the verbatim approach, however, is that it puts names on the record, and that is one of the key steps in establishing responsibility and accountability for actions taken and not taken to establish a methodological basis for making LRT planning decisions. And as for loss of records, that is a lot less likely to happen when a report is posted on a website and multiple downloads can occur with extreme ease.

Section 7 contains a summary of the analyses of the replies received from of the City of Ottawa, the NCC and the federal and provincial governments in response to ***Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition.***

Then, in section 8, I discuss whether the responses shed light on the reasoning process behind two major features of Ottawa's light rail transit (LRT) plan, 2009 edition. That is, traversing downtown Ottawa by underground tunnel or by surface, and using the Western Parkway for part of the LRT system west of downtown Ottawa. A matter of particular interest is the extent and degree to which a methodological basis for decisions is evident in the responses provided by the agents of the City of Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, the Government of Canada, and the Province of Ontario.

By way of illustration as to what I have in mind, the reader is referred to the reports done for the Transport Canada project, ***Methodologies for Identifying and Ranking Sustainable Transport Practices In Urban Regions.*** The reports can be viewed at <http://www.wellarconsulting.com/>

More than forty decision methods and techniques are identified in the ten project reports which have been available online for from six to ten months or more. It is reasonable to expect that some of those methods and techniques, as well as others identified by the four government bodies, would be explicitly mentioned in the responses as being part of the reasoning process behind decisions involving the Western Parkway and/or the downtown tunnel or surface traverse.

The report closes with the suggestion in section 9 of two important next steps that could and/or should be taken by non-government organizations, including initiatives which pursue matters raised in this report, and those which branch off.

A central point of concern is that people who may have LRT-related questions in 20 30, or 50 years may not be here now, and there are likely to be some issues, concerns, etc., that they will wish had been documented. Section 9 outlines a means of improving the quality of Ottawa's LRT discourse, and a means of improving documentation procedures through an initiative that could be launched now in anticipation of future information needs.

## 2. Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition

The two sets of questions for which answers are sought deal with the downtown portion of the LRT system, and the Western Parkway segment. The questions are presented here as context for the communications and analyses which follow.

### a. Questions about LRT Plans

1. What is the current "congestion level" on streets in downtown Ottawa that were considered as potential surface LRT routes?
2. What is the "congestion level" standard that was used to reject the surface option, and what is the source of this standard?
3. What studies were undertaken to establish that the "congestion level" standard could be achieved on the potential surface route(s)?
4. What studies were undertaken to establish that the "congestion level" standard could not be achieved on the potential route(s)?
5. On the assumption that one or more of the surface routes could meet the "congestion level" standard, what is the difference in projected capital costs between the surface routes and the tunnel route?
6. Was this difference in capital costs considered in studies that led to recommending or choosing the tunnel option?
7. How many kilometres of surface LRT could be built with the difference in the projected capital costs between the surface and tunnel options in downtown Ottawa?
8. What is the projected length of time in months required to complete the downtown tunnel segment of the LRT system?
9. What is the projected length of time in months required to construct a downtown surface route segment of the LRT system?
10. In what ways has a sustainable transport test been used in Ottawa's LRT studies and decisions to date?

There are numerous other questions that could be asked about the downtown portion of Ottawa's LRT plan, 2009 edition. However, the questions presented above are selected because they involve substantively important issues, they deal with fundamentals that will be of interest for many years to come, and they are not readily evaded by smoke-blowing respondents.

## **b. Questions about the Western Parkway Route**

1. What are the passenger loading figures that you have calculated for all the potential west-of-downtown lines for the initial 30 years of LRT service?
2. What is the potential for rezoning light rail-associated properties along the Parkway and other routes west of downtown?
3. What are the associated revenues from each route that could be generated to offset light rail system capital costs for the initial 30 years of LRT service?
4. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, how many street segments could be converted to which kinds of alternative uses, and how could those changes serve and promote light rail-based sustainable transport in Ottawa?
5. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, what will be the net financial gain realized by the City of Ottawa as a result of taking street segments out of the road network in areas proximal to the respective LRT routes currently under consideration?
6. What is the potential for increasing the number of apartment units proximal to the respective LRT routes under consideration west of downtown?
7. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits of linking each alternative route under consideration to the O-Train line?
8. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits associated with station construction for the respective routes west of downtown?

Similar to the case for the downtown tunnel questions, those regarding the Western Parkway involve substantively important issues, they deal with fundamentals that will be of interest for many years to come, and they are not readily evaded by smoke-blowing respondents.

As a result, it is highly likely that these questions will have a shelf life that lasts as long as the debate goes on about the western connection to downtown.

Moreover, if my reading of the current discourse is reasonably accurate, it appears fair to say that the questions about the Western Parkway could also be used in setting the design parameters for impending research/studies into the location and other features of all legs of the LRT system, whether in the plan for 2009 or for subsequent years.

### **3. Communications Exchanged with the City of Ottawa, and the Analysis of the City's Response to *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition***

#### **Part A. Email Communications Leading to the Response**

The City of Ottawa response to the questions raised about the downtown and Western Parkway segments of the LRT plan, 2009 edition, was received on August 10, 2009. . The next several pages contain the communications which apparently led to the production of the City of Ottawa response.

To those who may wonder about the matter of timing, I suggest it is likely a fortuitous turn of events that communications with the City of Ottawa became more effective immediately after *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition* was posted on the Transport 2000 Canada website on June 27, 2009. That is, credit for achieving action on questions that had been outstanding for many, many months is due, in my opinion, to the initiative of Councillor/Acting Mayor Michel Bellemare who instructed City of Ottawa staff to respond to the questions about the LRT plan 2009 edition. Comparisons of the emails in the *Questions* report and those which follow reveal how quickly Mr. Bellemare took action relative to some of his council colleagues.

\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:17 AM  
**To:** Michel Bellemare  
**Subject:** Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan  
**Importance:** High

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

On June 27, 2009, Transport 2000 Canada posted my report, *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*. The report can be viewed at <http://www.transport2000.ca/>

It seemed most fortuitous that your commentary "Rail project shows Ottawa is on the right track" would appear just two days later in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 29, 2009, and I read it with great care in a search for answers to questions that have been a matter of record with the City of Ottawa for one to many months. As shown, the report contains materials from emails sent to councillors on October 1, 2008, and May 18, 2009.

Regrettably, your commentary does not appear to answer any of the questions that are repeated in the report, although it seems necessary from the title and

content of your commentary that you must have the answers in hand in order to justify the claims made.

I would be most grateful, therefore, if you would respond at the earliest moment with the answers to the questions previously presented to you and to many of your council colleagues.

I hasten to add that there is another round of questions to follow those regarding the Ottawa River Parkway route and the downtown subway/surface option, and as you will appreciate the degree of difficulty in answering questions increases, sometimes exponentially, the longer the time taken to deal with inter-related issues imbedded in complex processes.

Please be assured, therefore, that I look forward to receiving the requested information at the earliest moment, so that the matter of whether Ottawa is on the right track in regard to its LRT plan and program can be examined and evaluated on the basis of factual, pertinent evidence.

It is noted in closing that this communication will be forwarded to interested parties.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Bellemare, Michel [mailto:Michel.Bellemare@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:50 AM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Dr. Wellar,

Thank you for your correspondence concerning light rail.

I have not read your report about Ottawa's LRT Plan, am not aware of your particular questions, and therefore did not write my article with you in mind as my individual audience. My article, submitted to the paper last week, was more general in nature, highlighting the state of the city and a number of issues advanced during the past couple of months. The *Ottawa Citizen* selected its own title for my article.

That said, I have asked Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers to respond to your questions.

Best regards,

MICHEL BELLEMARE  
ACTING OTTAWA MAYOR / MAIRE D'OTTAWA PAR INTÉRIM  
[WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA](http://WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA)  
613-580-2481

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 2:22 PM  
**To:** 'Bellemare, Michel'  
**Cc:** 'Nancy.Schepers@ottawa.ca'  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

Thank you for your prompt reply.

I understand the general nature of your commentary, but in my case having been involved with the Ottawa transit file for about 40 years, I was searching for some particulars. My search was not successful for the reasons given in your communication.

However, I am optimistic that the particulars that I seek will be forthcoming in the very near future, and I look forward to receiving the response from Nancy Schepers regarding the questions in the report.

Thanks again for moving on this matter in a timely manner.

Best wishes.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Irvine, Irene [mailto:Irene.Irvine@ottawa.ca] **On Behalf Of** Schepers, Nancy  
**Sent:** June 30, 2009 2:54 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Cc:** Bellemare, Michel; Abouhenidy, Mona; Craig, Gary  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Sent on behalf of Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability

Your e-mail dated June 29, 2009 regarding your questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan has been forwarded to me from Councillor Michel Bellemare.

Please be advised that a response to your inquiry will be forthcoming once staff have had an opportunity to review it.

Yours truly,

*Nancy Schepers  
Deputy City Manager  
Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave., W, Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Tel: (613) 580-2424 x12230  
Fax: (613) 560-6028  
E-Mail: [nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca](mailto:nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca)*

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**From:** Munn, Beverly [<mailto:Beverly.Munn@ottawa.ca>]  
**Sent:** July 6, 2009 6:10 PM  
**To:** [wellarb@uottawa.ca](mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca)  
**Subject:** Ottawa's LRT Program -- Questions  
**Importance:** High

Hello Mr. Wellar;

I am writing to apologize for the delay in responding to your e-mail regarding Ottawa's LRT program. Councillor Deans had asked me to follow-up with you to ensure that you are kept up-to-date on the project by City Staff. The project contact person is:

**Project Contact:**  
Dennis Gratton, MCIP, RPP  
Senior Project Manager  
Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West, 4th Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
E-mail: <mailto:dott@ottawa.ca>

I would recommend that you forward any questions to Mr. Gratton that you have regarding the project. Detailed information is also available on the City of Ottawa website at [www.ottawa.ca](http://www.ottawa.ca)

Regards,  
Beverly Munn  
Office of Councillor Diane Deans  
Gloucester-Southgate Ward  
513-580-2480

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 07, 2009 7:22 PM  
**To:** Munn, Beverly  
**Subject:** FW: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Hello Ms. Munn,

I am pleased to note that the inquiry regarding *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition* has been forwarded by acting Mayor Michel Bellemare to Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers for a response. Information in that regard is contained in the emails which follow.

Please advise councillor Deans in that regard.

Thank you.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

**From:** Munn, Beverly [mailto:Beverly.Munn@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 8, 2009 2:06 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** Additional information that you may find helpful

Hello Dr. Wellar;

Thank you for your e-mail. I am writing to provide you with information on how to obtain updates on the transit plan. Ms. Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager of Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability will be distributing a quarterly newsletter electronically to anyone who has signed up on the City's website for updates regarding the Transportation Master Plan. She has advised that the newsletter will focus on Council's directions for transit implementation including:

- o Status of environmental assessments
- o The LRT Technology Forum

- o Procurement strategy
- o Investment strategy
- o Status of funding partners

I hope this information is helpful.

Regards,  
Beverly Munn  
Office of Councillor Diane Deans  
Gloucester-Southgate Ward

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 10, 2009 2:46 PM  
**To:** Munn, Beverly  
**Subject:** RE: Additional information that you may find helpful

Hello Ms. Munn,

Thank you for the suggestion about updates. I perused a number of pages of the city's website, but I did not locate a page dealing with the sign-up option. Perhaps it is part of one of the pages for which the link is (temporarily) broken.

Regards.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Geography  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

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**From:** Munn, Beverly [mailto:Beverly.Munn@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 13, 2009 4:46 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** RE: Additional information that you may find helpful

Hello Dr. Wellar;

I asked City Staff to follow-up on your enquiry and I was advised that the city is making some changes to the TMP site. City Staff suggest that in the meantime you can register using the Beyond Ottawa 2020 site (which is the same contact list). You will receive all the land-use and transportation related e-newsletters. This is the link they provided:

[http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/public\\_consult/beyond\\_2020/signup\\_en.html](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/public_consult/beyond_2020/signup_en.html)

Regards,

Beverly

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**Part B. City of Ottawa Response to the Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition.**

The City of Ottawa response was received on August 10, 2009. The covering email and file number for the communication are as follows.

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**From:** Sauve, Diane [mailto:Diane.Sauve@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** August 10, 2009 3:42 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dr. Wellar,

Please find enclosed a response to your e-mail sent to Councillor Bellemare regarding questions about Ottawa's LRT plan.

Thank you,

John L. Moser  
General Manager  
Planning and Growth Management Department

File Number T01-01-TMPIRS09

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In the interests of convenience and clarity, the design approach for this paper is to proceed on a question-by question-basis. A subsequent paper could include an inter-question and inter-response analysis, but a decision about preparing such a report is still under consideration.

It may also be useful to explicitly note that for this analysis I am wearing my former "professor's hat". That is, a question is asked, and the task is to determine how well the question is answered.

This is a daunting task, but having graded thousands of undergraduate and graduate exams over thirty years, and graded many hundreds of research proposals for agencies in Canada, the United States, and abroad, I am optimistic that I can do the job fairly and with the required due diligence.

Further, it is noted that the questions asked about the LRT traverse of downtown, and the Western Parkway corridor are not new by any means. The fact is, questions have been asked about similar initiatives in cities around the world for decades. As a result, it would be inappropriate to regard the questions put to the City of Ottawa, the NCC, and the federal and provincial governments as breaking new and difficult ground in urban transportation.

Finally, in terms of fairness, I note that the City of Ottawa has had many months to prepare responses to the questions, some of which must surely have been asked many times since the year 2000. Moreover, the City has dozens of highly trained individuals on staff and on consulting contracts.

As a result, it is not appropriate to grade the responses at the undergraduate level. Instead, the questions are considered to be at the level of a PHD comprehensive exam, or dissertation defense, which is actually setting a low rather than a high bar for an LRT plan involving multi-billions of dollars in capital expenditures; millions of dollars in operating costs per year; millions of person-trips per year; etc., etc., etc.

For the purposes of this paper, a Pass-Fail marking system is used. Also, the scope of my assignment is to critique, not to attempt correct the responses, or to suggest modifications. If the bar needs to be raised in those regards, then it should be done by the National Capital Commission, the Government of Canada, and/or the Province of Ontario, all of which have the resources for such a task. And, of course, each of them has significant financial, land use, environmental, social, economic, and other oversight responsibilities for Ottawa's LRT plan.

### **Questions and Responses, Downtown Segment of the LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**

#### **Q1. What is the current "congestion level" on streets in downtown Ottawa that were considered as potential surface LRT routes?**

Response: During the peak periods, the streets in the downtown core are operating close to or above capacity as evidence by the volume to capacity ratio at the Inner Area screenlines (1.03 for the Rideau River/Queensway, 0.89 for the O-Train line, and 0.98 for the Rideau River North). Despite that six major arterial roads cross downtown Ottawa, the range of on-street options to provide high quality rapid transit service is constrained by local geographic conditions. The escarpment to the west of downtown presents a physical barrier limiting direct connections from the West Transitway into the downtown. Similarly, to the east, there are a limited number of crossings of the Rideau Canal that directly connect to the East Transitway. Also, street width and block length dictate the physical space available for transit lanes and station platforms. Bus, LRT-only and bus/LRT combination surface options were examined based on

future transit demand, anticipated headway, vehicle length and street configuration and it was concluded that it is not possible to develop an acceptable surface option to meet the 2031 transit ridership demand. Please refer to the [Development of a Downtown Transit Solution and Network Implications, April 2008](#) report (presented to the Joint Transportation and Transit Committee on 16 April 2008) for additional information.

**Analysis.** A Google keyword-based search on August 18, 2009 which focused on the term “congestion” yielded the following results;

- congestion- 15,700,000 (yes, almost 16 million)
- congestion level -- 30,200
- congestion charge -- 422,000
- congestion price – 3,980,000
- congestion measure – 11,600
- congestion index – 18,500
- congestion indicator – 15,200
- congestion test – 8,900
- congestion variable – 1,900
- congestion relationship – 400
- congestion standard – 1,460
- urban congestion – 84,500
- urban transportation congestion – 48,600

Bearing in mind that urban areas are congested by definition, a fact of life which has been known for many centuries, none of the results listed above should come as a surprise to anyone who is alert to the world around him or her. That is, there is a rich, dynamic body of literature (actually, multiple bodies of literature) on the topic of congestion, and it is reasonable to expect the response from the City of Ottawa to incorporate a full understanding of that literature.

However, there is seemingly little evidence in the response to Q1 that congestion is perceived as a multi-faceted concept, nor does it appear to be fully appreciated that LRT (light rail transit) in point of fact refers to public transit.

Moreover, the response indicates no appreciation of the fact that “congestion level” is multi-modal in nature, and tends to vary by mode. Further, the focus of the response on the vehicle-capacity (v/c) ratio reflects a narrow, private motor vehicle-driven regard for the meaning of “congestion”.

As a consequence, even this part of the response is only marginally relevant to Q1, since no reference is made as to how the availability of light rail transit would affect the v/c ratio by peak hour, day of week, month of year,, type of trip, type of trip-maker, etc .I note in closing this comment that the cited reference which was used as the basis of the response ([Development of a Downtown Transit Solution](#)

[and Network Implications, April 2008](#)) does not appear to contain materials which directly address Q1.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q1: FAIL.**

**Q2. What is the “congestion level” standard that was used to reject the surface option, and what is the source of this standard?**

Response: As identified in the City’s Transportation Master Plan, the congestion standard in Ottawa is a maximum 90% demand to capacity ratio with the exception of the urban core (bounded by the Ottawa River, Rideau River, Queensway and O-Train line) where a 100% demand to capacity ratio is considered acceptable. This position reflects a greater tolerance for congestion and the physical impracticality of road expansion in that area.

**Analysis.** Following the path created by the response to Q1, the City of Ottawa response to Q2 continues to represent the City’s urban transportation situation solely in terms of how the private motor vehicle contributes to or is affected by congestion, and uses the vehicle to capacity (v/c) ratio as the sole factor to support its argument. However, the uni-modal approach to explaining the congestion level standard is insufficient and inadequate in a multi-modal context, and particularly in a purported “world class” city.

Further, the seemingly unlimited or unbounded faith in the v/c ratio is cause for further concern, since the ratio cut-off point (90%) is an arbitrary choice rather than a “divine” intervention. Moreover, it suffers the same failings of the level of service (LOS) scheme whenever that scheme is purported to provide a mathematically logical basis for decision making. That is, the v/c ratio concept is not only inadequate because it is a uni-modal application in a multi-modal environment, but there is no internal magic to the ratio value used for decisions. Rather, whatever value is chosen, it is a choice, and is seemingly made in this case to keep the private motor vehicle traffic moving at such a level as to deny a surface LRT route, or surface LRT routes for that matter.

**Grade for City of Ottawa response to Q2: FAIL.**

**Q3. What studies were undertaken to establish that the “congestion level” standard could be achieved on the potential surface route(s)?**

Response: The v/c ratio of 0.9 was established through the development of the 1997 TMP. A working paper titled “*Transportation Systems Management*” was produced in January 1997 for the former Region of Ottawa-Carleton (publication # 19-49).

**Analysis.** The response to Q3 has nothing to do with the question. Indeed, it is remindful of those occasions when students who had nothing substantive to write in regard to the question asked, would write something of a “wing and a prayer” nature to fill a blank page or two, and hope to get a few marks for effort.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q3: FAIL.**

**Q4. What studies were undertaken to establish that the “congestion level” standard could not be achieved on the potential route(s)?**

Response: See reply to Question 1.

**Analysis.** The response to Q1 was assigned a grade of FAIL. Further, the only study cited in the response to Q1 treats Ottawa’s transportation future as an extension of its past and present, and does not give due, practical, operational regard to Ottawa’s purported shift in modal priorities, that is, to walking, cycling, and transit modes, with a significantly diminished role for the private motor vehicle.

Note to File: Should the City of Ottawa request a “do over”, stipulate that it must first pass a qualifying exam on the meaning and implications of the concept “the cascading effect”.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q4: FAIL**

**Q5. On the assumption that one or more of the surface routes could meet the “congestion level” standard, what is the difference in projected capital costs between the surface routes and the tunnel route?**

Response: Since all surface options were deemed to be not feasible/practical, no cost estimates were developed for them. For the tunnel, the estimates are \$555M for LRT tunnel, \$780M for bus tunnel and \$1032 for bus/LRT combination tunnel.

**Analysis.** The response to Q5 is based on the responses to Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4, all of which were assigned a Grade of FAIL. Further, the statement which is provided reveals the City of Ottawa is not cognizant of the counterfoil research methodology nor, it appears, does it understand the role of the “hypothetical” in articulating scenarios, .

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q5: FAIL**

**Q6. Was this difference in capital costs considered in studies that led to recommending or choosing the tunnel option?**

Response: See reply to Question 5.

**Analysis.** As a result of a lack of cognizance of counterfoil research, and the failure to appreciate the role of the "hypothetical" in articulating scenarios, the City of Ottawa failed to develop the fundamentals that would have enabled it to perform the kinds of studies that are called for in a multi-billion dollar, multi-year enterprise.

Note to File: Should the City of Ottawa request a "do over", stipulate that it must first pass a qualifying exam on the meaning and implications of concept of "the cascading effect".

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q6: FAIL**

**Q7. How many kilometres of surface LRT could be built with the difference in the projected capital costs between the surface and tunnel options in downtown Ottawa?**

Response: See reply to Question 5.

**Analysis.** The City of Ottawa failed to answer the question, because the reply to Question 5 is not pertinent to Q7.

Note to File: Should the City of Ottawa request a "do over", stipulate that it must first pass a qualifying exam on the meaning and implications of the concept of "the cascading effect".

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q7: FAIL**

**Q8. What is the projected length of time in months required to complete the downtown tunnel segment of the LRT system?**

Response: Approximately 36 months for tunnel construction.

**Analysis.** If the City of Ottawa had experience in light rail transit tunnel construction, and had compiled a list of lessons learned, one item on the list would doubtless been to not use a point estimate for projecting length of time to achieve transit tunnel completion unless the metric is "decades". And, it would also surely have learned that in this context the modifier "approximately" is in contradiction with the precision of the numeric figure "36", as in 36 months.

On the other hand, if the City of Ottawa has no experience in transit tunnel construction, and cannot locate a situation which could be used as a corresponding proxy for tunneling in downtown Ottawa, then subjective estimation may be an appropriate methodology, and could yield what turns out to be an accurate estimate. However, the shortcomings noted above continue to hold.

Note to File: Should the City of Ottawa request a “do over”, stipulate that it must first pass a qualifying exam on the meaning and implications of the concepts of probability and estimating procedures as they relate to projecting the length of time needed to complete multi-component, multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects of an uncertain nature, including uncertain financing.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q8: FAIL**

**Q9. What is the projected length of time in months required to construct a downtown surface route segment of the LRT system?**

Response: Assuming that there was a feasible surface option, it would also take approximately 36 months to construct due to the need to relocate utilities and manage traffic operations during construction.

**Analysis.** See the analysis of the response to Q8, including the Note to File.

Additional Note to File. Should the City of Ottawa request a “do over”, stipulate that it must first clarify precisely what is being compared in Q8 and Q9. In brief, Q8 deals with the downtown tunnel segment of the LRT system, and Q9 deals with the downtown surface route segment of the LRT system, but the responses do not establish the degree of correspondence between the two end products.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q9: FAIL**

**Q10. In what ways has a sustainable transport test been used in Ottawa’s LRT studies and decisions to date?**

Response: All feasible rapid transit network options were assessed using sustainable transportation principles. Evaluation criteria were grouped as follows:

- Transportation (including accommodating future ridership, accommodating growth beyond the planning horizon, ability to attract additional riders, quality of service, reliability)
- Natural Environment (including impact on air quality and groundwater)
- Social/Cultural Environment (including impact on adjacent properties, improving accessibility, potential transit-oriented development, noise, and vibration)
- Capital and Operating Costs

**Analysis.** The materials in the response are part of a large body of subject matter that is generally associated with designing sustainable transport tests, and all of them have been present in various literatures for decades. However, the “laundry list” approach does not answer Q10 under any circumstances, and most

assuredly not in a situation involving billions of dollars, a multi-decade planning and construction program, and the task of achieving a large shift in modal use in order to achieve sustainable transport practices.

Note to File: Should the City of Ottawa request a “do over”, stipulate that it must first pass a qualifying exam on the meaning and implications of the concepts of sustainable, sustainable transport, test, assess, evaluate, principle and practice.

**Grade for City of Ottawa Response to Q10: FAIL.**

**Questions and City of Ottawa Response,  
Western Corridor Segment of the LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**

The City of Ottawa did not reply to the individual questions. Instead, it provided a general response. For completeness, and the record, all the questions are presented, followed by the response.

**Q1. What are the passenger loading figures that you have calculated for all the potential west-of-downtown lines for the initial 30 years of LRT service?**

**Q2. What is the potential for rezoning light rail-associated properties along the Parkway and other routes west of downtown?**

**Q3. What are the associated revenues from each route that could be generated to offset light rail system capital costs for the initial 30 years of LRT service?**

**Q4. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, how many street segments could be converted to which kinds of alternative uses, and how could those changes serve and promote light rail-based sustainable transport in Ottawa?**

**Q5. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, what will be the net financial gain realized by the City of Ottawa as a result of taking street segments out of the road network in areas proximal to the respective LRT routes currently under consideration?**

**Q6. What is the potential for increasing the number of apartment units proximal to the respective LRT routes under consideration west of downtown?**

**Q7. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits of linking each alternative route under consideration to the O-Train line?**

**Q8. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits associated with station construction for the respective routes west of downtown?**

The City of Ottawa did not respond directly to any question, or to any part of any question. Instead, a general response was provided, as follows.

Response: No decision has been made regarding the route for the Western Corridor LRT to Baseline Station. The Planning and Environmental Assessment Study will examine all feasible options. Please note the Statement of Work that was recently approved by Council on 17 June 2009 (<http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/tc/2009/06-17/ACS2009-ICS-PGM-0050.htm>). The Statement of Work identified the corridors to be examined as well as the evaluation criteria to be used in the assessment of the different options. The evaluation criteria already cover the majority of the issues that you have identified.

**Analysis.** Numerous attempts were made by this writer and others over the past year to learn about the evidence that had been assembled to support pronouncements by City of Ottawa politicians and staff that the Western Parkway is the “chosen route” west of downtown. It took a long time for the truth to come out but now, apparently, we have it.

That is, the City of Ottawa has not authored any substantive, empirical evidence to support claims made in media reports and at community association meetings about the pluses and minuses of any route west of downtown. Indeed, assuming the response to be accurate, no studies have been done that precede the Statement of Work which was approved by council on June 19, 2009.

As for the Statement of Work itself, however, there is little comfort to be taken from the assertion that “The evaluation criteria already cover the majority of the issues that you have identified.” In the first instance, the claim is factually incorrect, but there is a second instance which is even more disconcerting.

That is, the City of Ottawa response appears to demonstrate satisfaction with having achieved a laundry list of evaluation criteria. However, the cataloguing phase tends to be the easy part of research projects. Where the going gets tough, and the City of Ottawa may better appreciate this observation having failed all ten questions in the downtown section of the ‘exam’, is knowing how to use the criteria to examine relationships over time and space in methodologically robust studies.

Towards that end, perhaps the eight questions which have been begging for answers for many months can be instructive. In brief, they can now be targeted at the Statement of Work, and may assist the City of Ottawa in devising a

research agenda that yields better results than those it achieved in responding to questions about the downtown segment of the LRT plan.

Note to File. The City of Ottawa appears to need remedial work in order to fully appreciate the difference between problems and research problems, and the extent to which research questions are the key to how well a research problem is examined.

Further, in future analyses of any aspect of the City of Ottawa's Statement of Work involving the LRT file, it is necessary to obtain, in writing, the research questions, and especially those involving the design phase, and the reasons behind the derivation of the research questions in all the phases.

And, while in the derivation vein, the City of Ottawa response states that the "Planning and Environmental Assessment Study will examine all feasible options'. Questions immediately arise as to how the term "feasible" is or will be defined? What is meant, exactly, by the term "examined? Who will perform the work to be done and the credentials of those doing the work? And, who will oversee the work done, and their credentials, so as to ensure the methodological soundness of the feasible option research?

There is much more that could be said on this topic, but one last point must suffice. It is widely accepted among methodologists that people who do not readily grasp questions also have severe difficulty formulating them, and the City of Ottawa could be an entity case in point.

The point of emphasis is that it is critically important to ensure that LRT decisions are firmly grounded, and asking incisive questions are excellent tests.

Future research and researchers would be well-advised to document, monitor, and evaluate the questions that are asked and answered as the City of Ottawa moves through its LRT planning and implementation process.

**Grade for City of Ottawa response to questions Q1-Q8 regarding the Western Parkway: DEFERRED with serious misgivings.**

The seeming lack of understanding on the part of the City of Ottawa about the role of evaluation criteria in decision-making is grounds for a FAIL.

However, in the spirit of "Miracles Can Happen", the City of Ottawa is given six months after the posting of this report to attempt to demonstrate that it has learned about the intimate relationship between the downtown segment and the western leg or legs, and that it has also learned about how to incorporate evaluation criteria in methodologically robust analytical studies. Upon review of those materials, a decision could be made as to whether there is any point in the City of Ottawa having another go at the Western Parkway questions.

#### **4. Communications Exchanged with the National Capital Commission (NCC), and the Analysis of the NCC's Response to *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition***

##### **Part A. Email Communications Leading to the NCC Response**

The communications sent to Russell Mills, Chairman, National Capital Commission (NCC), include several emails exchanged with the City of Ottawa. This approach ensures that NCC has all the pertinent materials needed to prepare informed responses to the questions asked about the Western Parkway and the downtown portion of the LRT plan. Further, this approach ensures that future researchers can work from the certain knowledge that the NCC had been fully apprised of the LRT concerns that are imbedded in the questions initially sent to the City of Ottawa as the primary driver of LRT plans in Ottawa.

The downside of the complete record approach involving the basic communications is that of repetition. That is, the reader interested in two or more of sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 will encounter multiple sets of the emails exchanged with the City of Ottawa up to the email of August 10, which was when the City responded to the questions about the downtown segment of the LTR plan, and the Western Parkway issue.

To assist the reader who may wish to focus on emails exchanged with the NCC, the email identifiers are printed in **dark yellow**.

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**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2009 3:42 PM**  
**To: Mills, Russell**  
**Subject: Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr. Mills,

You are mentioned in this string of emails regarding the matter of obtaining answers to questions about Ottawa's LRT plans. In the absence of a timely response to the questions asked, some of them as long ago as eight (8) months, I am looking to you for assistance.

The full details about the questions-answers issue are explained in the following emails and in the posted report, so I do not repeat them here.

Thank you in advance for assistance rendered.

Regards.

Barry Wellar

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]

**Sent:** July 12, 2009 3:15 PM

**To:** David Jeanes; David Jeanes; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; george neville; Tim Lane; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; Transport 2000; Tim Lane; 'J. Goss'; 'Chris Holloway'; 'kenwestcar@sympatico.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; 'Michael Kostiuik'; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; 'Beltzner Klaus'; 'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-André Larose'

**Cc:** 'tndanderson@gmail.com'; 'Bellemare, Michel'

**Subject:** Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Hello to All,

I expected that I would be forwarding answers to at least some of the questions within a matter of hours, or at most a couple of days, since all the questions must surely have been asked and answered previously.

It therefore strikes me as very odd, to say the least, that no replies have been received as of this date.

That said, I am moved to wonder about the evaluation processes in place at NCC and at the federal and provincial agencies responsible for the Ottawa LRT file. Simply put, the first round contained fundamental but straightforward questions, and if they cannot be answered in a matter of days at most then I shudder to think how long it would take for the City of Ottawa to provide complete answers to the fundamental but increasingly complex questions that were being framed for the second and third rounds.

However, I have other matters to attend to, and I have no interest and no intention of chasing after the City of Ottawa in regard to LRT questions, since that is exactly what the NCC, and the federal and provincial governments should be doing for reasons that are obvious to all of you.

As a result, I will be forwarding this string of communications to my MP, John Baird, my MPP, Jim Watson, and NCC Chairman Russell Mills. Perhaps, as

suggested in the report *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>), each of them will take the lead in "persuading" the City of Ottawa to answer the questions that pertain to their respective portfolios.

And, as a further perhaps, maybe my questions will induce them to ask some pertinent questions of their own, and to inform the public and the public record accordingly.

Regards.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]

**Sent:** July 3, 2009 8:33 PM

**To:** David Jeanes; David Leibold (dl@transport2000.ca); doug arnold;  
Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca; george neville; Tim Lane;  
Tr2000@yahoogroups.com; Transport 2000; 'Michael Kostiuik'; 'Beltzner Klaus';  
'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-Andr é Larose'; Tim Lane;

**Cc:** 'tndanderson@gmail.com'

**Subject:** FW: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Hello to All,

I had hoped to spare those who do not want to read any more about my exchanges with the City of Ottawa on LRT matters, but I received a number of "keep me in the loop" requests, so for those who have had it on the Ottawa LRT file, it seems easiest and more reliable if you just hit Delete when you receive the occasional message from me titled LRT Ottawa or Ottawa LRT.

As shown below, Michel Bellemare has moved the inquiry onto the desk of Nancy Schepers, which is more than was done by anyone on Transit Committee or Transportation Committee.

Admittedly the file has only been shuffled but, ever the optimist, hope continues to spring eternal, so I expect full, detailed answers in a timely manner to all the questions asked.

More in due course.

Barry Wellar

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**From:** Irvine, Irene [mailto:Irene.Irvine@ottawa.ca] **On Behalf Of** Schepers, Nancy  
**Sent:** June 30, 2009 2:54 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Cc:** Bellemare, Michel; Abouhenidy, Mona; Craig, Gary  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

*Sent on behalf of Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability*

Your e-mail dated June 29, 2009 regarding your questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan has been forwarded to me from Councillor Michel Bellemare.

Please be advised that a response to your inquiry will be forthcoming once staff have had an opportunity to review it.

Yours truly,

*Nancy Schepers  
Deputy City Manager  
Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave., W, Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Tel: (613) 580-2424 x12230  
Fax: (613) 560-6028  
E-Mail: nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca*

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 2:22 PM  
**To:** Bellemare, Michel  
**Cc:** Schepers, Nancy  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

Thank you for your prompt reply.

I understand the general nature of your commentary, but in my case having been involved with the Ottawa transit file for about 40 years, I was searching for some particulars. My search was not successful for the reasons given in your communication.

However, I am optimistic that the particulars that I seek will be forthcoming in the very near future, and I look forward to receiving the response from Nancy Schepers regarding the questions in the report.

Thanks again for moving on this matter in a timely manner.

Best wishes.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Bellemare, Michel [mailto:Michel.Bellemare@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:50 AM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Dr. Wellar,

Thank you for your correspondence concerning light rail.

I have not read your report about Ottawa's LRT Plan, am not aware of your particular questions, and therefore did not write my article with you in mind as my individual audience. My article, submitted to the paper last week, was more general in nature, highlighting the state of the city and a number of issues advanced during the past couple of months. The *Ottawa Citizen* selected its own title for my article.

That said, I have asked Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers to respond to your questions.

Best regards,

MICHEL BELLEMARE  
ACTING OTTAWA MAYOR / MAIRE D'OTTAWA PAR INTÉRIM  
[WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA](http://WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA)  
613-580-2481

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:17 AM  
**To:** Bellemare, Michel  
**Subject:** Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan  
**Importance:** High

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

On June 27, 2009, Transport 2000 Canada posted my report, **Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**. The report can be viewed at <http://www.transport2000.ca/>

It seemed most fortuitous that your commentary "Rail project shows Ottawa is on the right track" would appear just two days later in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 29, 2009, and I read it with great care in a search for answers to questions that have been a matter of record with the City of Ottawa for one to many months. As shown, the report contains materials from emails sent to councillors on October 1, 2008, and May 18, 2009.

Regrettably, your commentary does not appear to answer any of the questions that are repeated in the report, although it seems necessary from the title and content of your commentary that you must have the answers in hand in order to justify the claims made.

I would be most grateful, therefore, if you would respond at the earliest moment with the answers to the questions previously presented to you and to many of your council colleagues.

I hasten to add that there is another round of questions to follow those regarding the Ottawa River Parkway route and the downtown subway/surface option, and as you will appreciate the degree of difficulty in answering questions increases, sometimes exponentially, the longer the time taken to deal with inter-related issues imbedded in complex processes.

Please be assured, therefore, that I look forward to receiving the requested information at the earliest moment, so that the matter of whether Ottawa is on the right track in regard to its LRT plan and program can be examined and evaluated on the basis of factual, pertinent evidence.

It is noted in closing that this communication will be forwarded to interested parties.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

**Questions and NCC Response,  
Downtown Segment of the LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**

- Q1. What is the current “congestion level” on streets in downtown Ottawa that were considered as potential surface LRT routes?**
- Q2. What is the “congestion level” standard that was used to reject the surface option, and what is the source of this standard?**
- Q3. What studies were undertaken to establish that the “congestion level” standard could be achieved on the potential surface route(s)?**
- Q4. What studies were undertaken to establish that the “congestion level” standard could not be achieved on the potential route(s)?**
- Q5. On the assumption that one or more of the surface routes could meet the “congestion level” standard, what is the difference in projected capital costs between the surface routes and the tunnel route?**
- Q6. Was this difference in capital costs considered in studies that led to recommending or choosing the tunnel option?**
- Q7. How many kilometres of surface LRT could be built with the difference in the projected capital costs between the surface and tunnel options in downtown Ottawa?**
- Q8. What is the projected length of time in months required to complete the downtown tunnel segment of the LRT system?**
- Q9. What is the projected length of time in months required to construct a downtown surface route segment of the LRT system?**
- Q10. In what ways has a sustainable transport test been used in Ottawa’s LRT studies and decisions to date?**

**Questions and NCC Response,  
Western Corridor Segment of the LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**

- Q1. What are the passenger loading figures that you have calculated for all the potential west-of-downtown lines for the initial 30 years of LRT service?**
- Q2. What is the potential for rezoning light rail-associated properties along the Parkway and other routes west of downtown?**

- Q3. What are the associated revenues from each route that could be generated to offset light rail system capital costs for the initial 30 years of LRT service?**
- Q4. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, how many street segments could be converted to which kinds of alternative uses, and how could those changes serve and promote light rail-based sustainable transport in Ottawa?**
- Q5. Over the course of 30 years after installation of the LRT system, what will be the net financial gain realized by the City of Ottawa as a result of taking street segments out of the road network in areas proximal to the respective LRT routes currently under consideration?**
- Q6. What is the potential for increasing the number of apartment units proximal to the respective LRT routes under consideration west of downtown?**
- Q7. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits of linking each alternative route under consideration to the O-Train line?**
- Q8. What are the economic, financial, environmental, and operational costs and benefits associated with station construction for the respective routes west of downtown?**

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**From: Lwow, Lyne [mailto:LLwow@ncc-ccn.ca]**  
**Sent: August 13, 2009 9:29 AM**  
**To: wellarb@uottawa.ca**  
**Cc: nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca**  
**Subject: Response from M. Lemay, CEO, National Capital Commission, to your e-mail of July 12, 2009**

This message is sent on behalf of Marie Lemay, Chief Executive Officer, National Capital Commission.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
E-mail: [wellarb@uottawa.ca](mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca)

Dear Dr. Wellar:

Thank you for your e-mail of July 12, 2009, addressed to Mr. Russell Mills, Chair of the National Capital Commission's (NCC) Board of Directors, regarding the City of Ottawa's Rapid Transit Plan.

The NCC supports of the notion of high quality rapid transit as a key component of sustainable urban transportation, and is encouraged by the City of Ottawa rapid transit vision in the hope that it will contribute to reducing the need for future roadways, contribute to the accessibility and vitality of communities, as well as make a positive contribution to the quality of our health and our environment.

As you are aware, as part of the federal land use and design review, evaluations and approvals process, land use and transportation proposals affecting federal lands require review, evaluation and advice by the NCC. The NCC responsibility is to provide significant value added and constructive advice within the context of Capital building and improvement.

We have been and continue to monitor the progress of the Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel functional design and environmental assessment processes, focusing on the Capital perspective. We have requested details such as on the principles that guide decisions on the alignment, station locations, impacts on neighbouring communities, ridership, economic viability, transit-oriented development opportunities, potential interaction with Gatineau, as well as implications of the broader Ottawa rapid transit network.

The NCC has also assigned senior planning staff to coordinate with City of Ottawa's officials on all initiatives emanating from the Ottawa Transportation Master Plan and downtown transit tunnel project.

Rest assured that the NCC will continue to work with the City in representing the federal planning interests and advancing the Capital perspective.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Lemay, P.Eng., ing.  
Chief Executive Officer

c.c. Ms. Nancy Schepers, Deputy Manager, City of Ottawa

Lyne Lwow  
Manager, Executive Office Administration and Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer / Gestionnaire, administration du bureau de la direction et adjointe exécutive à la première dirigeante  
National Capital Commission / Commission de la capitale nationale  
202-40 Elgin, Ottawa, ON K1P 1C7  
[www.canadascapital.ca](http://www.canadascapital.ca)  
Tel: (613) 239-5271 Fax: (613) 239-5039  
Email / courriel: [llwow@ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:llwow@ncc-ccn.ca)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Analysis.** My initial reaction to the NCC response is precipitated by flashbacks to some 30 years as a professor grading exams and term papers. Under that circumstance, the NCC response is mindful of what might be termed the “clear as mud but covers the ground approach”, which is all generalities and no specifics. That was a favoured approach of smoke-blowing, soon-to-be-failed students who lacked the capacity for deep thought. In this case there are 18 questions on the table, and the NCC response not only evaded answering any of them, it provided no evidence that it has the methodology, the data, and the inclination to substantively answer any of them if it chose to do so.

My second reaction involves another series of flashbacks, this time to my years as a senior research officer, director, and senior policy research advisor at the former Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. A constant source of chuckles and smirks was the phrase, “We’re from the federal government, and we’re here to do all we can short of actual help”.

The target of the jibe included ministers, deputy ministers, secretaries, assistant deputy ministers, etc., that is, the persons of higher authority who approved institutional messages to ensure that they were: covered in numerous layers of glorious bump that was heavily larded with high-sounding buzzwords; provided nothing for the media or other critics to turn into political points; paved the way for deniability; and included directions to the nearest exit should half-baked notions start to turn into evidently bad ideas.

And, my third reaction is that the questions asked are first and second order of difficulty, with higher degree of difficulty questions to follow once the initial terms of analytical engagement are set. The refusal or inability of the NCC to answer even one question is more than just a “head shaker”, it suggests that the institution may simply not be able to answer the questions, and therefore chose to go with one or both of the “bob and weave” strategies outlined above.

Note to File. It has been suggested on many recent occasions that the NCC has lost the capacity, or the will, or both, to conduct substantive research.

Given the non-answers to questions involving the downtown segment and the potential Western Parkway segment of Ottawa’s LRT plan, 2009 edition, the lesson drawn is that future inquiries about NCC research would be well-advised to assume an eyes-wide-open, fully skeptical posture that puts the onus squarely on the NCC to demonstrate that it walks the talk when it comes to making decisions based on methodologically designed research.

**Grade for National Capital Commission response to questions Q1-Q8 regarding the Western Parkway: FAIL**

**Grade for National Capital Commission response to questions Q1-Q10 regarding the downtown segment of the LRT: FAIL**

## 5. Communications Exchanged with John Baird, MP, Ottawa West-Nepean, and Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Communities, Government of Canada, and the Analysis of Responses to *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*

### Part A. Email Communications Leading to the Government of Canada Response

The communications exchanged with John Baird include several emails sent to and received from the City of Ottawa. This approach ensures that the Government of Canada (through Mr. Baird) has all the pertinent materials needed to prepare informed responses to the questions asked about the Western Parkway and the downtown portion of the LRT plan, 2009 edition. Further, this approach ensures that future researchers can work from the certain knowledge that the Government of Canada had been fully apprised of the LRT concerns that are imbedded in the questions which were initially sent to the City of Ottawa as the primary driver of LRT plans in Ottawa.

The downside of the complete record approach involving the basic communications is that of repetition. That is, the reader interested in two or more of sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 will encounter multiple sets of the emails exchanged with the City of Ottawa up to the email of August 10, which was when the City responded to the questions about the downtown segment of the LTR plan, and the Western Parkway issue.

To assist the reader who may wish to focus on emails exchanged with Mr. Baird, the email identifiers are printed in **blue**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: July 12, 2009 4:27 PM**  
**To: 'Baird.J@parl.gc.ca'**  
**Subject: FW: Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr Baird,

You are mentioned in this string of emails regarding the matter of obtaining answers to questions about Ottawa's LRT plans. In the absence of a timely response to the questions asked, some of them as long ago as eight (8) months, I am looking to you for assistance.

The full details about the questions-answers issue is explained in the following emails and in the posted report, so I do not repeat them here.

Thank you in advance for assistance rendered.

Regards.

Barry Wellar

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 12, 2009 3:15 PM  
**To:** David Jeanes; David Jeanes; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; george neville; Tim Lane; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; Transport 2000; Tim Lane; 'J. Goss'; 'Chris Holloway'; 'kenwestcar@sympatico.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; 'Michael Kostiuik'; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; 'Beltzner Klaus'; 'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-André Larose'  
**Cc:** 'tndanderson@gmail.com'; 'Bellemare, Michel'  
**Subject:** Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Hello to All,

I expected that I would be forwarding answers to at least some of the questions within a matter of hours, or at most a couple of days, since all the questions must surely have been asked and answered previously.

It therefore strikes me as very odd, to say the least, that no replies have been received as of this date.

That said, I am moved to wonder about the evaluation processes in place at NCC and at the federal and provincial agencies responsible for the Ottawa LRT file. Simply put, the first round contained fundamental but straightforward questions, and if they cannot be answered in a matter of days at most then I shudder to think how long it would take for the City of Ottawa to provide complete answers to the fundamental but increasingly complex questions that were being framed for the second and third rounds.

However, I have other matters to attend to, and I have no interest and no intention of chasing after the City of Ottawa in regard to LRT questions, since that is exactly what the NCC, and the federal and provincial governments should be doing for reasons that are obvious to all of you.

As a result, I will be forwarding this string of communications to my MP, John Baird, my MPP, Jim Watson, and NCC Chairman Russell Mills. Perhaps, as suggested in the report *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>), each of them will take the lead in "persuading" the City of Ottawa to answer the questions that pertain to their respective portfolios.

And, as a further perhaps, maybe my questions will induce them to ask some pertinent questions of their own, and to inform the public and the public record accordingly.

Regards.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 3, 2009 8:33 PM  
**To:** David Jeanes; David Leibold (dl@transport2000.ca); doug arnold; Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca; george neville; Tim Lane; Tr2000@yahoogroups.com; Transport 2000; 'Michael Kostiuk'; 'Beltzner Klaus'; 'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-Andr é Larose'; Tim Lane;  
**Cc:** 'tndanderson@gmail.com'  
**Subject:** FW: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Hello to All,

I had hoped to spare those who do not want to read any more about my exchanges with the City of Ottawa on LRT matters, but I received a number of "keep me in the loop" requests, so for those who have had it on the Ottawa LRT file, it seems easiest and more reliable if you just hit Delete when you receive the occasional message from me titled LRT Ottawa or Ottawa LRT.

As shown below, Michel Bellemare has moved the inquiry onto the desk of Nancy Schepers, which is more than was done by anyone on Transit Committee or Transportation Committee.

Admittedly the file has only been shuffled but, ever the optimist, hope continues to spring eternal, so I expect full, detailed answers in a timely manner to all the questions asked.

More in due course.

Barry Wellar

---

**From:** Irvine, Irene [mailto:Irene.Irvine@ottawa.ca] **On Behalf Of** Schepers, Nancy  
**Sent:** June 30, 2009 2:54 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Cc:** Bellemare, Michel; Abouhenidy, Mona; Craig, Gary  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

*Sent on behalf of Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability*

Your e-mail dated June 29, 2009 regarding your questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan has been forwarded to me from Councillor Michel Bellemare.

Please be advised that a response to your inquiry will be forthcoming once staff have had an opportunity to review it.

Yours truly,

*Nancy Schepers  
Deputy City Manager  
Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave., W, Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Tel: (613) 580-2424 x12230  
Fax: (613) 560-6028  
E-Mail: nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca*

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 2:22 PM  
**To:** Bellemare, Michel  
**Cc:** Schepers, Nancy  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

Thank you for your prompt reply.

I understand the general nature of your commentary, but in my case having been involved with the Ottawa transit file for about 40 years, I was searching for some particulars. My search was not successful for the reasons given in your communication.

However, I am optimistic that the particulars that I seek will be forthcoming in the very near future, and I look forward to receiving the response from Nancy Schepers regarding the questions in the report.

Thanks again for moving on this matter in a timely manner.

Best wishes.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

---

**From:** Bellemare, Michel [mailto:Michel.Bellemare@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:50 AM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Dr. Wellar,

Thank you for your correspondence concerning light rail.

I have not read your report about Ottawa's LRT Plan, am not aware of your particular questions, and therefore did not write my article with you in mind as my individual audience. My article, submitted to the paper last week, was more general in nature, highlighting the state of the city and a number of issues advanced during the past couple of months. The *Ottawa Citizen* selected its own title for my article.

That said, I have asked Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers to respond to your questions.

Best regards,

MICHEL BELLEMARE  
ACTING OTTAWA MAYOR / MAIRE D'OTTAWA PAR INTÉRIM  
[WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA](http://WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA)  
613-580-2481

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]

**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:17 AM

**To:** Bellemare, Michel

**Subject:** Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

**Importance:** High

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

On June 27, 2009, Transport 2000 Canada posted my report, **Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**. The report can be viewed at <http://www.transport2000.ca/>

It seemed most fortuitous that your commentary "Rail project shows Ottawa is on the right track" would appear just two days later in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 29, 2009, and I read it with great care in a search for answers to questions that have been a matter of record with the City of Ottawa for one to many months. As shown, the report contains materials from emails sent to councillors on October 1, 2008, and May 18, 2009.

Regrettably, your commentary does not appear to answer any of the questions that are repeated in the report, although it seems necessary from the title and content of your commentary that you must have the answers in hand in order to justify the claims made.

I would be most grateful, therefore, if you would respond at the earliest moment with the answers to the questions previously presented to you and to many of your council colleagues.

I hasten to add that there is another round of questions to follow those regarding the Ottawa River Parkway route and the downtown subway/surface option, and as you will appreciate the degree of difficulty in answering questions increases, sometimes exponentially, the longer the time taken to deal with inter-related issues imbedded in complex processes.

Please be assured, therefore, that I look forward to receiving the requested information at the earliest moment, so that the matter of whether Ottawa is on the right track in regard to its LRT plan and program can be examined and evaluated on the basis of factual, pertinent evidence.

It is noted in closing that this communication will be forwarded to interested parties.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow

Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

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**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: August 16, 2009 12:03 PM**  
**To: 'Baird.J@parl.gc.ca'**  
**Subject: FW: Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr. Baird,

This is a follow-up communication to the one sent you on July 12, 2009 regarding the report, ***Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition***, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>).

A second report in which I analyse responses to the *Questions* report is in progress, and I wish to know whether you will comment on the matter as requested and, if so, when I can expect to receive the comments.

Your prompt consideration of this communication will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
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Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

\*\*\*\*\*  
On September 02, 2009, another email was sent to Mr. Baird in the above regard. As the reader may be aware, from time-to-time the failure of officials to respond to inquiries is attributed to the proverbial "glitch", which may refer to a technical factor or a filing error or even the inadvertent scrubbing of a complete folder. And, sometimes, no answer is forthcoming for any number of reasons. In this case the third email is sent based on a variation of the theme popularized by former U.S. presidential candidate Ross Perot who was fond of saying. "Measure twice, cut once" In the case of this paper which is based on inquiries sent to government agencies, the operant theme is "Ask three times, and take a failure to reply as a no". The email sent to Mr. Baird, and which included all the prior, related emails (they are not repeated here for reasons of space) is as follows.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: September 2, 2009 9:55 PM**  
**To: 'Baird.J@parl.gc.ca'**  
**Subject: FW: Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr. Baird,

This is a follow-up communication to those sent to you on August 16 and on July 12, 2009 regarding the report, *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>).

A second report in which I analyse responses to the *Questions* report is in progress, and I wish to know whether you will comment on the matter as requested and, if so, when I can expect to receive the comments.

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**Analysis.** No response was received after three inquiries. One reasonable interpretation of the non-response posture is that the federal government does not have, and very possibly does not know how to obtain the answers to the questions. And, another reasonable interpretation is that the federal government has adopted a tactical stance, whereby it is waiting for the City of Ottawa to reveal its position on the questions that I have asked, and/or questions the federal government intends to ask. Other interpretations include the federal government does not care about the communications, and it cares but not enough to answer questions. It is my opinion that if the Government of Canada proposes to put taxpayer money into the LRT project, the questions that I asked could be applicable in a milieu where the federal government is held accountable for program expenditures, such as in committee or by the Auditor-General.

**Grade. In terms of its communications skills, the Government of Canada is awarded a well-deserved FAIL. For the LRT and Western Parkway questions, the mark is DEFERRED in both cases.**

## **6. Communications Exchanged with Jim Watson, MPP, Ottawa West-Nepean, and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Province of Ontario, and the Analysis of Responses to *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition***

### **Part A. Email Communications Leading to the Province of Ontario Response**

The communications exchanged with Jim Watson include several emails sent to and received from the City of Ottawa. This approach ensures that the Province of Ontario (through Mr. Watson) has all the pertinent materials needed to prepare informed responses to the questions asked about the Western Parkway and the downtown portion of the LRT plan, 2009 edition. Further, this approach ensures that future researchers can work from the certain knowledge that the Province of Ontario had been fully apprised of the LRT concerns that are imbedded in the questions which were initially sent to the City of Ottawa as the primary driver of LRT plans in Ottawa.

The downside of the complete record approach involving the basic communications is that of repetition. That is, the reader interested in two or more of sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 will encounter multiple sets of the emails exchanged with the City of Ottawa up to the email of August 10, which was when the City responded to the questions about the downtown segment of the LTR plan, and the Western Parkway issue.

To assist the reader who may wish to focus on emails exchanged with Mr. Baird, the email identifiers are printed in **dark red**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2009 3:22 PM**  
**To: Watson\_Jim-MPP-CO**  
**Subject: FW: Ottawa LRT: To date, No Answers to Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr Watson,

You are mentioned in this string of emails regarding the matter of obtaining answers to questions about Ottawa's LRT plans. In the absence of a timely response to the questions asked, some of them as long ago as eight (8) months, I am looking to you for assistance.

The full details about the questions-answers issue are explained in the following emails and in the posted report, so I do not repeat them here.

Thank you in advance for assistance rendered.

Regards.

Barry Wellar

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]

**Sent:** July 12, 2009 3:15 PM

**To:** David Jeanes; David Jeanes; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; george neville; Tim Lane; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; Transport 2000; Tim Lane; 'J. Goss'; 'Chris Holloway'; 'kenwestcar@sympatico.ca'; 'Gow, Harry'; 'Michael Kostiuik'; 'David Leibold'; doug arnold; 'Tr2000@yahoogroups.com'; 'Beltzner Klaus'; 'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-André Larose'

**Cc:** 'tndanderson@gmail.com'; 'Bellemare, Michel'

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As a result, I will be forwarding this string of communications to my MP, John Baird, my MPP, Jim Watson, and NCC Chairman Russell Mills. Perhaps, as suggested in the report *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>), each of them will take the lead in "persuading" the City of Ottawa to answer the questions that pertain to their respective portfolios.

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**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** July 3, 2009 8:33 PM  
**To:** David Jeanes; David Leibold (dl@transport2000.ca); doug arnold; Gladstone.DH@forces.gc.ca; george neville; Tim Lane; Tr2000@yahoogroups.com; Transport 2000; 'Michael Kostiuik'; 'Beltzner Klaus'; 'Bernie Geiger'; 'Paul-Andr é Larose'; Tim Lane;  
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Hello to All,

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More in due course.

Barry Wellar

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**From:** Irvine, Irene [mailto:Irene.Irvine@ottawa.ca] **On Behalf Of** Schepers, Nancy  
**Sent:** June 30, 2009 2:54 PM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Cc:** Bellemare, Michel; Abouhenidy, Mona; Craig, Gary  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

*Sent on behalf of Nancy Schepers, Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability*

Your e-mail dated June 29, 2009 regarding your questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan has been forwarded to me from Councillor Michel Bellemare.

Please be advised that a response to your inquiry will be forthcoming once staff have had an opportunity to review it.

Yours truly,

*Nancy Schepers  
Deputy City Manager  
Infrastructure Services and Community Sustainability  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Ave., W, Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
Tel: (613) 580-2424 x12230  
Fax: (613) 560-6028  
E-Mail: nancy.schepers@ottawa.ca*

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 2:22 PM  
**To:** Bellemare, Michel  
**Cc:** Schepers, Nancy  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

Thank you for your prompt reply.

I understand the general nature of your commentary, but in my case having been involved with the Ottawa transit file for about 40 years, I was searching for some

particulars. My search was not successful for the reasons given in your communication.

However, I am optimistic that the particulars that I seek will be forthcoming in the very near future, and I look forward to receiving the response from Nancy Schepers regarding the questions in the report.

Thanks again for moving on this matter in a timely manner.

Best wishes.

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

---

**From:** Bellemare, Michel [mailto:Michel.Bellemare@ottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:50 AM  
**To:** wellarb@uottawa.ca  
**Subject:** RE: Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan

Dear Dr. Wellar,

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I have not read your report about Ottawa's LRT Plan, am not aware of your particular questions, and therefore did not write my article with you in mind as my individual audience. My article, submitted to the paper last week, was more general in nature, highlighting the state of the city and a number of issues advanced during the past couple of months. The *Ottawa Citizen* selected its own title for my article.

That said, I have asked Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers to respond to your questions.

Best regards,

MICHEL BELLEMARE  
ACTING OTTAWA MAYOR / MAIRE D'OTTAWA PAR INTÉRIM  
[WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA](http://WWW.BELLEMARE-OTTAWA.CA)  
613-580-2481

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]  
**Sent:** June 29, 2009 11:17 AM

**To:** Bellemare, Michel  
**Subject:** Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan  
**Importance:** High

Dear Councillor/Acting Mayor Bellemare,

On June 27, 2009, Transport 2000 Canada posted my report, **Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition**. The report can be viewed at <http://www.transport2000.ca/>

It seemed most fortuitous that your commentary "Rail project shows Ottawa is on the right track" would appear just two days later in the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 29, 2009, and I read it with great care in a search for answers to questions that have been a matter of record with the City of Ottawa for one to many months. As shown, the report contains materials from emails sent to councillors on October 1, 2008, and May 18, 2009.

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It is noted in closing that this communication will be forwarded to interested parties.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: August 16, 2009 2:16 PM**  
**To: 'jwatson.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org'**  
**Subject: Response to Report on Questions about Ottawa LRT Plan?**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr. Watson,

This is a follow-up communication to the one sent you on July 12, 2009 regarding the report, *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition*, (<http://www.transport2000.ca/>).

A second report in which I analyse responses to the *Questions* report is in progress, and I wish to know whether you will comment on the matter as requested and, if so, when I can expect to receive the comments.

Several prior communications on this topic are included for your information/guidance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Distinguished Research Fellow  
Transport 2000 Canada  
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 303  
PO Box 858 Station B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9

\*\*\*\*\*

The next communication with the Government of Ontario was an email that was sent to me by Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation. As noted in the email of August 24, Mr. Bradley had been contacted by Mr. Watson and was responding, it appears, on behalf of the Government of Ontario since the LRT is a transportation matter and therefore falls within the purview of the Ministry of Transportation. So far, so good, as they say, the inquiry questions had been forwarded to the agency which presumably has its hand on the pulse of Ottawa's LRT program.

For the record, I note that I had focussed on Mr. Watson as the contact point, since he had been featured in a number of Ottawa media stories involving various aspects of Ottawa's LRT plan, and I could not recall any major statements by Mr. Bradley or the Ministry of Transportation about any aspect of Ottawa's LRT policy, plan, or program.

That quiet profile notwithstanding, two Ministers now had the Ottawa LRT file on their desks, computer screens, or wherever they keep such files, and optimism gave rise to the notion that since “two heads are better than one” as the saying goes, the chances of receiving substantive answers to the downtown and Western Parkway questions had increased considerably.

The communication of August 24 from Mr. Bradley was hard copy on Ministry of Transportation letterhead. As a result, a scanned version of the communication from Mr. Bradley was created and then copied into this report. The letter from Mr. Bradley appears on the next page.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Unfortunately, and as expressed in the email of August 26 to Mr. Bradley, copied to Mr. Watson, for various reasons the letter of August 24 from Mr. Bradley was considerably less than I had hoped for, and expected. Indeed, at first reading I wondered about the seeming coincidence of thoughts in the NCC letter and the Ministry of Transportation letter.

However, the immediate bottom line for me is the degree to which the responses address the questions. . That is, if the responses are sufficient, then they are assigned a PASS, and if they are not, then a FAIL is appropriate. The email of August 26 to Mr. Bradley was written in such a way as to emphasize my interest in specifics related to the questions asked as opposed to hopes, wishes, good intentions, or other “feelings” towards the City of Ottawa’s LRT plan, 2009 edition.

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**From: Barry Wellar [mailto:wellarb@uottawa.ca]**  
**Sent: August 26, 2009 4:44 PM**  
**To: 'jbradley.mpp@liberal.ola.org'**  
**Cc: 'jwatson.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org'**  
**Subject: Letter of August 24, 2009: Clarification required**  
**Importance: High**

Dear Mr. Bradley,

Your letter to me of August 24, 2009 refers to an email that I sent to Jim Watson, but it does not include the subject or the date of the email to which you are referring.

Further, your response is of such a general nature that I have no idea what to do with your communication since, as a rule, I tend to ask questions that entail specific rather than general comments.

Therefore, please re-send me the letter of August 24 as the text of an email or as an email attachment, and also forward to me the email that I sent to Mr. Watson so that I can clearly understand the context for your comments.

Your prompt response in the above regards will be most appreciated, since I am writing a report to deadline.

I emphasize in closing that in the interests of time and any future communications on this matter, I am specifically requesting that the response to this email be in electronic form, that is, please send me an email with attachments rather than hard copy.

Regards.

Barry Wellar

Dr. Barry Wellar, MCIP  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Geography  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

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In response to my email of August 26, the following email of September 02, was received from "Minister of Transportation Correspondence". The bad news is that the email lacks content which is pertinent to the 10 downtown LRT questions, and the eight Western Parkway questions, but the good news is that it is an email.

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**From: Minister of Transportation Correspondence (Web Account)**  
**[mailto:minister8@ontario.ca]**  
**Sent: September 2, 2009 2:29 PM**  
**To: wellarb@uottawa.ca**  
**Subject: RE: Letter of August 24, 2009: Clarification required**

Thank you for your e-mail. It is important to the ministry and has been forwarded to the appropriate ministry office for review.

Once again, thank you for bringing your concerns to Minister Bradley's attention. He always appreciates hearing from members of the public.

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**Analysis.** Replies to inquiries were received from the office of Jim Watson, and that of his colleague, Jim Bradley, Minister of Transportation. However, the replies do not address the questions raised about either the downtown segment or the Western Parkway.

It is my impression that the analysis of the Government of Canada's non-response is applicable here, and much of it is therefore repeated.

One reasonable interpretation of the non-response posture is that the Government of Ontario does not have, and very possibly does not know how to obtain the answers to the questions.

Another reasonable interpretation is that the Government of Ontario has adopted a tactical stance, whereby it is waiting for the City of Ottawa to reveal its position on the questions that I have put to the City of Ottawa.

And yet another reasonable interpretation could be tied to the fact that the Ministry of Transportation has taken what might be termed a "thumping" over the years for many of its proposals in the Ottawa area.

Contentious issues which come to mind include such private motor vehicle inclinations as proposing various kinds of widenings or expansions of 417 through Ottawa, even though the City of Ottawa has expressly declared that its priorities are walking, cycling and transit.

Under this circumstance, in conjunction with its pro-road building tradition of many decades hanging out in broad daylight for all to see, it could be that the Ministry of Transportation is keen to simply not get involved in any of the details.

Such a hands-off approach not only avoids a credibility challenge, it also does not run the risk of revealing that the Ministry is first and foremost a pro highway organization that has little political, professional, or technical interest in developing and manifesting expertise in the LRT domain.

It is my belief that if the Government of Ontario proposes to put taxpayer money into the LRT project, then the questions that I asked could be applicable in a milieu where the provincial government of the day is held accountable for program expenditures, such as in committee or in the program reviews performed by the Provincial Auditor.

Note to File. The Province of Ontario has given undertakings in regard to both the cancelled/terminated N-S LRT plan, and the LRT plan, 2009 edition. It might be instructive to inquire about any studies done to support the undertakings.

**Grade. For the responses to the LRT and Western Parkway questions, the mark is DEFERRED in both cases.**

## **7. Summary of Analysis of Responses to *Questions, Questions, and More Questions about Ottawa's LRT Plan, 2009 Edition***

Examination of the analysis of responses prompts thoughts about the domino effect, and its running partner, the cascading effect.

In this case, the falling down or tumbling down began at the outset with the City of Ottawa. It is reasonable to expect the City of Ottawa to have already done a considerable amount of heavy lifting “research-wise”, and to be fully prepared to cogently, explicitly, and thoroughly deal in writing with any of the questions raised, with or without a moment's notice.

After all, the LRT file has been unfolding for nine years, and the Transitway file for 30 years, so the light rail transit research express, or LRTRE for short, should have left the station a long time ago with its destination clearly in mind and its path clearly marked.

However, it appears that there is no LRTRE, and the phrase “milk run ordinary” is more appropriate when branding the quality of thinking behind Ottawa's LRT plan. Simply put, the first domino toppled at Question 1, and all the remaining dominoes (Questions 2-10) on the City of Ottawa downtown LRT platform came crashing down in lock-step fashion, one after the other.

As for the cascading effect related to the downtown portion of the LRT plan, 2009 edition, it began with the failure of the City of Ottawa to put substantive evidence on the table well before it was asked for by me or anyone else. When it failed to elevate the body of research studies and data through a methodologically designed research program, the City of Ottawa set the stage for a cascading effect of the negative kind.

That is, by not creating an analytical basis for participation in the discourse about the downtown segment of the LRT plan, 2009 edition, the City of Ottawa opened the door to the kinds of low-level, undirected, non-analysable, and non-evaluable responses from the NCC and the Province of Ontario that were reported in sections 4, 5, and 6. And as for the federal government, it has yet to provide any kind of response to the questions raised, or to provide access to downtown LRT-related questions that it might have raised with the City of Ottawa.

The long story short in regard to the cascading process is therefore as follows. In the absence of empirical evidence which is based on analytical studies to set the stage for discourse, the search for truth regarding the downtown LRT segment is put at serious if not irrecoverable risk. When the other three players in the piece adopt the vague generalities strategy, which boils down to saying everything and nothing in a paragraph of what is politely referred to as “murk”, the descent is complete.

As for the Western Parkway issue, municipal politicians and staff talked in numerous venues and attracted much media coverage over many months regarding claims about the Western Parkway being everything from the preferred to the priority choice for an LRT route west of downtown. I note in this regard so that the record is clear, that I had occasion to participate in some of these media events, and contributed media stories to the “discussion”.

I have no doubts whatsoever that all the representations from city officials that I am able to recall were intended to convey the impression that there was solid evidence to support their positions about the need for, basis for, or reasons for the Western Parkway to be used as an LRT route.

Given what is reported in the City of Ottawa’s response to the eight Western Parkway questions, however, it appears that there were/are no City of Ottawa-sponsored studies of any kind to support those contentions.

Regarding the recently-approved proposed studies themselves, it strikes me as highly unlikely that they will have the scope and methodological wherewithal to provide the kinds of answers that deserve to go hand-in-hand with decisions involving the LRT leg or legs west of the downtown segment. That said, and bearing in mind once again that the proposed studies are just now beginning after nine years of LRT discourse, and 30 years after Transitway discourse, the phenomena of domino effect and cascading effect loom large when it comes to characterizing the City of Ottawa’s LRT research process.

Which brings me to the engagement of the NCC, the federal government, and the Province of Ontario in the Western Parkway issue.

The NCC was well aware that the Western Parkway, which is the property of the NCC, was receiving attention as a potential LRT route, and generating a lot of public discomfort and even anger in the process. Unfortunately, it appears fair to say, no one at the Commission had the presence of mind to recall that it represents the interests of all Canadians, or to realize that it is highly unlikely that Canadians in general would be enthusiastic about the NCC taking instructions from the City of Ottawa when it comes to deciding how to use NCC property. Once again the image of a domino toppling and a cascading effect taking hold comes to mind.

And as for the federal and provincial governments, to date they have brought nothing of a public, substantive nature to the Western Parkway debate. They may think that they do not have to, of course, since the primary players in this matter are the City of Ottawa and the NCC. The fact remains, however, that both the provincial and the federal government have committed hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to Ottawa’s LRT program, and it is reasonable to question whether either level understands how to include a value-for-money test in its hand-outs to municipalities.

## 8. Any Light Shed on the Reasoning Process Behind the Downtown Tunnel and the Western Parkway Features of Ottawa's Light Rail Tunnel (LRT) Plan, 2009 Edition?

At first glance, and in popular parlance, there could be an inclination to suggest the level of light being shed on the reasoning process as "Not so much".

However, and this may seem excessive in an era when marking papers with red ink is frowned upon, and students expect to get a "B" for showing up at class (even if to snooze), there are reasons to ask questions which ascertain what is known by agencies, and perhaps even more importantly, to ascertain what is not known. The dual aspect of questioning may be summarized as follows.

With regard to what the responses to questions reveal about the reasoning process within any of the four entities (City of Ottawa, NCC, federal government, and provincial government), the word **NOTHING** comes to mind. In other words, **I did not learn anything (from the responses) which informs me about the reasoning process used by any of the entities to provide answers to the questions asked.** The test in this case is that the responses should provide instructions, directions, or guidance which could be used to critically review policy, program, plan, and project materials of any kind for any of the four entities, including any re-visit to the N-S LRT orientation. They fail to do so.

On the other hand, however, several critical and fundamental findings emerge from the failure of the City of Ottawa and the NCC to deal effectively with questions pertaining to either the downtown segment or the Western Parkway.

**First beam of light.** The Region of Ottawa-Carleton/ City of Ottawa and the NCC have had 30 years to put the downtown LRT segment in perspective, and to formulate and implement plans and development practices so that the downtown LRT segment is more opportunity than challenge. They did not do so, and appear to have learned little about the consequences of such a massive, chronic oversight. If left unattended, there is no apparent reason to expect either of these entities to do better over the next 30 years. The critical message here from a reasoning perspective is to be very concerned about public entities (City of Ottawa, NCC) that appear to have at best only a casual regard for and understanding of the time factor in a project that is already decades in the making, with many more decades involved in the unfolding of the project.

**Second beam of light.** It is reasonable to expect after 30 year's experience with the Transitway, and the more recent experience of the N-S LRT kerfuffle, that the City of Ottawa and the NCC would be very aware of the **legacy factor**. None of the responses received from either organization indicates that it has even the slightest appreciation of the legacy factor, much less how to incorporate the legacy factor into decision processes. Further, and a matter of major concern in

this respect is the apparent lack of understanding of the reasons behind the rapidly growing consensus to build flexibility into urban transportation systems.

**Third beam of light.** In the Transport Canada project report, ***Sampler of Commentaries on Methods and Techniques that Could be Used in Making Decisions about Identifying, Adopting, or Implementing Sustainable Transport Practices***, (can be viewed online at: [wellarconsulting.com](http://wellarconsulting.com)) I introduced “anatomical sourcing” as a decision methodology. The reasons for referring to anatomical sourcing as a means of decision making were based on reality on the one hand, and the hope that the process could be improved on the other. That is, there are well-established research procedures for investigating relationships, and I wanted to encourage the use of these robust procedures.

Examination of the responses from the City of Ottawa and the NCC suggests to me that the responses are the products of the anatomical sourcing method, which may explain in part the criticisms arrayed against the City of Ottawa and the NCC on all counts. That is, responses of the top-of-the-head, knee-jerk, and gut feeling variety are poor substitutes for those based on and analytically derived from methodological procedures. I believe that the questions were sitting ducks for methodologically-based analysis, but none of the ducks took a hit. That is not a good sign for a multi-billion dollar LRT program affecting thousands of properties, hundreds of thousands of residents and visitors on a daily basis, etc.

**Fourth beam of light.** It is reasonable to expect that all the policy talk swirling around about climate change and sustainability, and all the talk about making hard infrastructure decisions, would have gone hand-in-hand with methodologically-based investigations by the federal and provincial governments to ensure that Ottawa’s LRT plan, 2009 edition, is based on hard evidence derived from hard-edged analytical studies. It is possible that such studies have been done, but if so why are these governments refusing to talk about them publicly since every dollar spent by governments is a taxpayer dollar, and LRT projects in trouble are more akin to plonk than fine wine: And, if such studies have not been done, does anyone know how to spell **a-c-c-o-u-n-t-a-b-i-l-i-t-y**?

**Fifth beam of light.** It appears to be generally conceded that the public discourse about the N-S LRT plan was at best a shambles, with neither elected officials nor professional staff (including consultants) distinguishing themselves as public communicators. That loss of public respect and public faith was a huge red flag that warranted attention, and appropriate responsive action.

However, it is my impression that the present LRT plan is in a similar mess, and I doubt that the responses given to the questions asked about the downtown segment of the LRT, or the Western Parkway, are going to help the LRT cause. And, in my further opinion, this is not just a matter of doing another 180, it is a matter of making fundamental changes in the reasoning process, and properly explaining those changes for the benefit of current and future residents.

## 9. Next Steps

Much has already been written in this report about the shortcomings of the City of Ottawa, the NCC, and the federal and provincial governments in their responses to basic questions about the downtown segment of the LRT, and the Western Parkway as an LRT route. Until those fundamental questions are properly addressed, there is no practical purpose to discuss in this report the kinds of next steps that could or should be taken by any of the government entities.

With the four government entities removed from the picture, two non-government next steps come to mind which could significantly increase both the quality of Ottawa's LRT discourse, and the documentation of that discourse.

The first step which comes to mind involves better engagement by Carleton University and University of Ottawa faculty and students in Ottawa's LRT debate.

It is my impression that the record of LRT debates in Montréal, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver is of much higher quality than that in Ottawa, and in my experience the higher level of the debate is due in part to the higher level of university participation through classes, theses/dissertations, and publications in a mix of fields such as geography, engineering, land use planning, economics, architecture, public health, operations research, and the management sciences.

Perhaps to start the ball rolling, faculty and students could consider the questions asked in this report as the bases for term paper assignments, thesis topics, or research proposals. And, if they use these questions to produce better questions, then bravo, that is what the scientific method is all about. And should the matter of funding arise, perhaps the government entities discussed in this paper could be asked to put up money to support needed, substantive research before they spend money to put shovels in the ground to dig big holes in the wrong places.

The second step involves documenting of the views of ordinary citizens. I am aware of many exceptional LRT-related letters to editors in both daily and weekly newspapers, and I have also examined several websites which contain materials that in my opinion are valuable now, and will be of exceptional value to researchers and others 5, 10, 20. and 50 or more years in the future.

Organizations such as Transport 2000 Canada, Friends of the O-Train, the Federation of Citizens Associations, and other public interest groups could provide a great deal of pertinent material, and the repository that I have in mind is the Ottawa Public Library. Note to community activists. You may be "weary" of the Ottawa LRT file, but I assure you that this effort will be most appreciated by those who want a grass roots, public service-oriented, and unvarnished look back at the "second phase" of Ottawa's LRT experience.

