



January 31, 2011

Dear Mr. Paul Croft et al,

Subject: Alternative Corridors Evaluation Criteria (Draft, January 2011)

This letter is sent jointly by the Woodroffe North Community Association and the Woodpark Community Association in response to your January 21, 2011 e-mail regarding Alternative Corridors Evaluation Criteria.

The Woodroffe North Community Association and the Woodpark Community Association have been active and vocal in public exchanges since the City of Ottawa initiated efforts to identify the best transportation corridor for future Western Light Rail Transit (WLRT) from Bayview to Baseline. Each Community's views on past public consultation efforts are a matter of public record. In summary, we have communicated grave concerns that many elements of meaningful and useful public consultation were lacking with regard to WLRT. The current effort, initiated on November 29, 2010, suffers from the same limitations as previous efforts.

LRT is the biggest decision that the City of Ottawa has, or is likely, to make over the next hundred years. Its impact and costs will be borne by the residents and taxpayers of Ottawa for many years to come. It is the City of Ottawa's duty to ensure that public consultation yields the quality of input required to support accountable decision-making by elected officials.

Responsible decision-making requires that governments, at all levels, consider the input it receives through public consultation. Appropriate public consultations rests on the provision of sufficient and precise information between the responsible body and the public to support effective and accountable decision-making. To be of any use, groups providing input must receive sufficient information so that can understand the "initiative" and meaningfully consider the issues, challenges, costs, etc. of the initiative.

Our community, along with the neighbouring Woodpark community, have prepared both general and specific comments on the draft Alternative Corridors Evaluation Criteria distributed on January 21, 2011.

General Comments:

1. At face value, many of the criteria seem to support a route other than the Parkway. The potential exposure lies in the lack of clarity concerning the means which will be used to evaluate each criteria. The lack of precise language concerning evaluation methods is of great concern. Terms such as "qualitative" or "comparative"

assessments are not sufficient given the significant costs and impacts involved. These criteria need to be further elaborated so we can understand how scores will be applied to each option.

2. Many of the indicators are in fact not indicators because they are not quantifiable. Again, the nomenclature is so general that it is very likely that those providing input will apply vastly different interpretations to the indicators.

3. Some of the indicators, as drafted, will skew the input and thus the assessment in favour of the status quo (i.e. use of the Ottawa River Parkway).

4. Numbering would have rendered the provisions of our comments a much easier task.

Specific Comments:

1. Apply Sustainable Design Best Practices - Indicator: Maximizing re-use of existing transit infrastructure.

Why is this a stand-alone criterion? The incremental cost of not using existing infrastructure will come out in the cost/benefit analysis (i.e. the existing route may have a lower construction cost and - as a result - may have a better cost/benefit ratio). Including this as a separate criterion effectively double counts in favour of the ORP corridor.

2. The Cost Analysis should be Class C, not the proposed Class D Analysis.

Class D is too high a level, and will ignore potential design points that will have a big impact on the final cost (and the relative cost/benefit of an option). In particular, the cost of the Parkway construction option must be based on specific design requirements imposed by the NCC to gain their approval for the Parkway route. The NCC could well require the construction of major burms, no overhead wires, a specific route that requires re-developing the road, speed limits, cut and cover, etc, etc. All this must be fleshed out before the cost of the Parkway option can be reasonably assessed. The City has argued in the past that "it is premature at this point" to know what the Parkway design will look like. This is not only false, it is misleading and simply avoids the inevitable discussion that has to happen with the NCC (if this is a serious option). Worse it may well lead to a totally inaccurate assessment of the relative costs of the options.

3. Compatibility with Adjacent Communities - Air Quality, Noise and Vibration

There are very precise tools to measure air quality yet the Project Team current intention is to use comparative assessment. This is not an appropriate assessment method. Regardless of the corridor selected any future impact must not result in a measurement which exceeds the provincial standard for acceptable air quality. A Comparative Assessment is not the right measurement tool when provincial regulations and standards are in place. The Project Team must rely exclusively on objective measurements and projections to evaluate air quality impacts.

In 2006, the City of Ottawa spent more than \$500,000.00 to develop and implement its Environmental Noise Control Guidelines in response to an OMB appeal by the Federation of Citizens Associations. Again, regardless of the corridor selected noise and vibration impacts must be measured or accurately forecast using appropriate measurement or prediction tools. The assessment and selection decision must not result in a situation where the City of Ottawa approved an LRT system which generates noise and vibration which exceeds the limits approved by Council in 2006 for noise and vibration from transportation sources, and then rely on a lack of available funding to justify delays in mitigating noise and vibration impacts all of which are capable of measurement or highly accurate predictions as part of the assessment and selection of a corridor. A comparative assessment will not produce the type of data required to assess noise and vibration levels.

The "Compatibility with Adjacent Communities" criterion should be expanded to include the notion of "improved service" to adjacent communities. An appropriate indicator would be: Every adjacent community will benefit from improved transit service and/or new service to existing communities impacted by LRT. Long term numerical ridership from adjacent communities through which the LRT passes must be considered in the evaluation when determining where to locate the system. The ease of access to this service will be important to maintain and to encourage use by those living in adjacent communities. The system is meant to replace bus service and depending on location, would result in the elimination of the rapid bus service used by those living in these areas. Thus without good access to the LRT, those local tax paying Ottawans would not benefit from the "improved" transit system that they are helping fund. It is essential to remember that to be successful, the LRT system which operates 24 hours, daily, needs paying customers all along its route and is not intended only to be a service for rush hour customers living in Kanata, Barrhaven and other satellite communities.

We look forward to seeing substantially revised Criteria and Indicators in the coming weeks.



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c.c. Mayor Jim Watson, City of Ottawa

Ms. Marie Lemay, CEO, National Capital Commission

Councillor Mark Taylor, City of Ottawa