

LONDON'S FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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By Ed Corrigan, Councillor Ward 7

The Long Term Transportation Corridor Protection Plan was approved by a joint session of Planning and ETC on Monday, September 24, 2001 and ratified by Council on October 1, 2001 in a 16 to 3 vote. An amendment allowed for some flexibility with the location of the north expressway which included the possibility of building part of the expressway in Middlesex Centre.

There have been 5 public forums already and extensive consultation with other stake holders and interested parties. An overwhelming majority of Council supported a full ring road with east and west expressways, and expanded arterial roads. Clearly with the difficulty of meeting our 15% Single Occupied Vehicles (SOV) reduction target and the increasing traffic problems in the City and which are especially acute in Byron, Westmount and Lambeth the expectation of the voting public is that something has to be done to improve traffic in London. In my opinion, based on feedback I have received from the community, a large majority of the voters in Ward 7 support a ring road. For example the Byron Business Association unanimously endorsed the idea.

The population projection for London is 675,000 over the next 50 or so years. When we reach that population target is largely irrelevant. The City will grow and expanded roads are necessarily a part of that process. I fully support expanded transit and support the 15% SOV reduction target, hence my seconding of Councillor Baechler's motion to provide real support to reach that 15% target. However, I believe that we must have a multifaceted approach to solving our transportation problems, i.e., one which improves roads and allows for expressways and enhanced arterial and major improvements in transit including Light Rail Transit.

I also ran and was elected on a platform that included declared support for a ring road. Controller Gord Hume, former councillor for Ward 7, also supported the ring road. To borrow and twist a phrase from McKenzie King, "a ring road if necessary but not necessarily a ring road." The action of Council only keeps open a range of options for the City of London to be decided sometime in the distant future. No one knows if there will be support or even a need for a ring road 50 years from now. However, I believe that I would be remiss in my duty as an elected councillor if I did not at least keep open that possibility if it was deemed necessary at some point in the distant future. A council many years from now will make those decisions.

If the City needs protected transportation corridors for vehicles, dedicated bus lanes or LRT's, or even walking or bike paths, the time to protect those corridors is now not when neighbourhoods are built and people's homes will be destroyed in providing transportation corridors when the City of London will need them.

Please feel free to contact me with your views. I certainly would like to hear from you and other constituents in Ward 7 on this and other issues. I can be contacted at (o) 661-1558 or (r) 652-0973.