



STRATFORD

Melissa Evers
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Transportation Planning Branch
Environmental Policy Office (Toronto)
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Via email: Melissa.evers@ontario.ca

Dear Ms. Evers:

Re: Intercommunity Bus Modernization

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the Intercommunity Bus Modernization Engagement forums. It was a valuable opportunity to hear the concerns and suggestions of others, and to share our perspective on this very important issue.

Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Stratford is a strong advocate of integrated public transportation. CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded organization with over 100 CFUW Clubs, such as Stratford's, across Canada. The National body was founded in 1919. At the local level CFUW Clubs are involved in community outreach on such initiatives as working to prevent violence against women, child poverty, transportation, the environment etc. CFUW holds special consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and belongs to the Education Committee of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. CFUW is an affiliate of Graduate Women International which represents women worldwide.

We have presented briefs to provincial and municipal governments, and work in partnership in SW Ontario with our community and with the city of Stratford, and with the SW Ontario Transportation Alliance, as well as in consultation with VIA and Metrolinx.

Following attendance at the London Bus Modernization forum, we would like to share the following points:

- **We value the rural communities of Ontario and strongly support the retention of a network of essential services.** Extended services and mass transportation (GO, VIA) are available in urban locations throughout Ontario, and must also be accessible to those living in smaller communities.

- We also believe that support of rural communities (Goderich, Kincardine, Hanover, Clinton e.g.) is **far more than just an economic issue. While business connections are vital, the social, educational and health needs of our citizens are equally vital to the maintenance of healthy communities.**
- Where bus companies were at one time maintaining routes connecting smaller communities to extended services, they no longer provide these services. **Operating purely on a for-profit basis was not sustainable.**
- Attention is being given to deregulating bus routes currently held but not used by bus companies to enable free market competition. **We fully support the concept of safety regulations being applied to all levels of public transportation, regardless of the size of the carrier.**
- Of equal importance is the question of incentive. Given that connecting transportation is essential, how can companies be invited to initiate and maintain consistent, reliable, and affordable service connecting smaller communities (e.g. Goderich, Hanover...) to rail transportation and to larger urban centres?
- We call attention to the integrated transportation networks that have been developed throughout the world to serve both smaller and larger communities: buses connecting communities to train stations and to essential services and extended services throughout regions. In some cases these are Public/Private/Partnerships, in some cases these are government supported, integrated and branded services. For example, AMTRAK maintains both AMTRAK branded buses and private buses, working in partnership. Bus systems are not expected to be entirely self-sustaining. **We believe a commitment to consistent, reliable and affordable corridor busing must include provincial support, as well as private investment.**
- Finally, we encourage the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) to explore integrated booking and tracking systems that bring all available services into one program to enable the most efficient use of resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback.

Mary Jane Amey
 President 2016-17, CFUW Stratford
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