

Kitchener, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2016

## Letter to the Region of Waterloo Council

KW Tenant Group is an active group in Traynor-Vanier neighbourhood and lives in the buildings that are along the Courtland -Traynor ION tracks. We are writing to the Regional Council to share our concerns regarding the current placement of the permanent fence along the ION tracks and the communication process that does not include the residents in the area.

Since the beginning of 2014, when the Hydro One work started under the Traynor Park and the Community Trail, no one has ever announced or communicated to the residents directly the changes to come in our neighbourhood to the residents directly. Only after the park and the trail were removed (both placed on Hydro One land) and our many crossings to the commercial area on the other side of the trail and Fairway Road have been blocked, we received brief communication from the LRT team and Hydro One. They told us that our access 1 km in length would be blocked off from Courtland to Wilson and shared a slim hope that there might be assessment of needs for a pedestrian crossing. Our attempts to communicate our concerns at that time to the City of Kitchener staff did not end in any direct response or communication in the summer of 2014.

We were told that the consultations regarding the changes in the neighborhood would come in 2017.

Now, we see that the permanent fence along one side of the ION tracks is put into place and we realize that our concerns might not be addressed in due time for construction of a pedestrian crossing along 1 km stretch.

Let us tell you about our neighbourhood. Most of the homes along the corridor are low-cost housing, either rented or owned. The challenge is that most residents do not have cars, many are using walkers or wheelchairs, and there are many newcomers and families with young children. Many residents are either: newcomers to Canada, international students, seniors or families on social assistance. All of us were walking to work, to the stores and our only food source Food Basic where we go for daily needs. Since 2014, we have patiently struggled with construction, taking two busses to get to the stores, walking 30 minutes or longer instead of 10minutes to get to stores or other transportation options. Many had to rely on their neighbours to get their daily groceries as they were no longer able to go for them themselves. We were a walking community in the real sense of the word.

We looked at the other locations that will have permanent fencing along ION and we still find the situation we have along the Hydro corridor unique in respect of the volume of crossings, resources in the neighbourhood, length and placement of permanent fencing as it cuts within a neighbourhood (not along an existing street but between the residential and commercial parts of the neighbourhood) and in between two stations. The permanent fence with no crossings in this area would impose ongoing hardship and disruption of daily routines for many residents and businesses.

# KW TENANT GROUP

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Our wish is to go back to the way we lived before, going to our daily walks to the businesses we like and not being late for work. We do not see any acceptable detours for the area and would like you to support the assessment of the ION corridor here in order to install an accessible pedestrian crossing on this 1km stretch. The conversations we had with the businesses on the other side of the tracks tells us they share our worry and we are positive that a passage through one of the parking lots would be an option. Hydro One corridor has been lent to the municipalities before, and we do not see why that would be an obstacle now.

We are concerned that the needs of the neighbourhood were not taken into consideration during the planning and construction of the LRT tracks and that this is still a timely request for a pedestrian crossing in the area in collaboration with the City of Kitchener, and that both residents and businesses would be properly consulted.

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KW Tenant Group

Cc: John Gazzola, Darshpreet Bhatti, Michael May