



September 6, 2016

## Social Development Centre

— WATERLOO REGION —

### City of Kitchener Council:

Mayor Berry Vrbanovic  
Councillor John Gazzola  
Councillor Scott Davey  
Councillor Dave Schnider  
Councillor Yvonne Fernandes  
Councillor Kelly Galloway-Sealock  
Councillor Paul Singh  
Councillor Bil Ionmidis  
Councillor Zyg Janecki  
Councillor Frank Etherington  
Councillor Sarah Marsh

### Waterloo Region Council:

Chairman Ken Seiling  
Councillor Berry Vrbanovic  
Councillor Elizabeth Clarke  
Councillor Tom Galloway  
Councillor Geoff Lorentz  
Councillor Karen Redman  
Councillor Dave Jaworsky  
Councillor Jane Mitchell  
Councillor Sean Strickland  
Councillor Doug Craig  
Councillor Helen Jowett

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Councillor Karl Kiefer  
Councillor Sue Foxton  
Councillor Joe Nowak  
Councillor Les Armstrong  
Councillor Sandy Shantz

Greetings Mayor Vrbanovic, Chairman Seiling and Members of Kitchener and Waterloo Region Councils:

We urge both the City of Kitchener and Waterloo Region Councils to support Kitchener's Traynor-Vanier neighbourhood residents and do what must be done to ensure they have pedestrian access to nearby shopping and businesses as was available before construction began for the light rail transit.

The current fencing along the LRT tracks in that neighbourhood is intended to be the permanent solution to ensure pedestrians do not cross the tracks. Although it is imperative that safe alternatives be provided for pedestrians; blocking pedestrian access for a kilometre is neither appropriate nor fair. Cutting off pedestrian access can triple the time it takes to walk to the area shopping, from 10-15 minutes to at least 40-45 minutes. This significantly decreases the walkability of the neighbourhood.

In addition, this situation will create an even greater safety risk as many pedestrians will continue to use short cuts by jumping over the fence. We know this has been done during construction with fences that were higher than the current permanent fence.

Prior to the start of construction there was a pedestrian walkway and playground (Traynor Park) on the Hydro One right of way near the curve where Traynor Avenue meets Vanier Drive. This path provided a convenient and safe route to the businesses along Wilson Avenue and Fairway Road. The pathway and park were closed in November 2013 without notice, nor with any explanation to nearby residents.

The Social Development Centre Waterloo Region (SDC - formerly known as the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo/Community Information Centre of Waterloo Region) has been working with residents in Traynor-Vanier apartment buildings since 2013 to improve social conditions in their neighbourhood.

When the Traynor Park playground equipment was removed and walkway fenced off in November of that year, SDC staff made enquiries to find out why. It was not until May 2014, after numerous attempts we were told the park and walkway were removed to accommodate the future construction of the Region's LRT. When asked what plans there were for restoring this facility they were told it was not known what, if anything was planned. At no time were my staff or area residents told the park and walkway would be permanently closed and that no pedestrian access would be planned to replace what had been there.

During 2014 as well, SDC staff inquired about public consultation opportunities. We directly asked about the station area planning process and requested to be kept informed of this process. We were informed that consultations in this neighbourhood would begin in 2017 with no information about how to be kept apprised of LRT planning and implementation processes for the area until that time.

From what we understand from LRT communications and community relations staff, the issue of pedestrian access had been raised during the early stages of consultation on the LRT. Recent communications state that City staff also raised pedestrian access as an issue. Somehow these concerns were forgotten or ignored during the planning and negotiations to use the Hydro right of way. To our knowledge there is no other situation similar to this along the entire LRT route.

All of this has happened despite the importance of preserving pedestrian access and neighbourhood walkability as presented in many LRT related reports and communications. For example, the Region's monthly ION Update published June 3, 2016 stated that: *The Fairview Park Mall transit terminal will provide a convenient transit service in a well-established Kitchener neighbourhood, with several residential apartments within a short stroll of this ION stop.* Why shouldn't local residents believe this applied to all of the nearby apartments and not just those on or near Wilson Avenue?

It is inconceivable that a playground and longstanding pedestrian access to Fairway Road has been permanently lost without any communication to the residents in the Traynor-Vanier neighbourhood. If SDC's efforts to get information and meet with whoever was responsible for that area did not result in timely, or complete, answers, how could residents have done this on their own, most with few resources and little experience with complex planning processes?

Recent news that the Region has \$35 million dollars available from the provincial and federal governments heralds an opportunity to cover any additional costs required to find a people friendly remedy to this situation.

The LRT process should not divide a neighbourhood in the way that is planned to be done in the Traynor-Vanier area of Kitchener. Neighbourhood residents should have been fully informed three years ago about what was being planned when the final route selection along the Hydro Corridor was finalized. Planning around the LRT tracks and station areas should have included local residents in direct meaningful ways. This neighbourhood and the needs of less advantaged residents should now be considered to ensure there are appropriate and workable solutions for pedestrian access along this stretch of the Region's LRT.

Sincerely,



Trudy Beaulne  
Executive Director