

## **Closing Representation for the Public LRT Inquiry Hearings**

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When lightening disabled a part of the LRT overhead train wires, causing yet one further disruption, it was just one more instance of lousy, unforgivable planning by P3 partners - the city of Ottawa and RTG. How many wheel cracks for instance, does it take, let alone derailments, to show a faulty LRT?

If the city-RTG had chosen more carefully and competently, instead of overhead wiring, a poorly chosen train model, and poorly laid-out tracks, among other technical preventable problems, Ottawa's ill-fated LRT system may have turned out differently.

After all, there are many such train systems around the world that have not experienced the litany of Ottawa's LRT problems.

In their recent given closing arguments the city and RTG blame each other for all the costly and irreversible mistakes. They seem more intent on saying to each other, things like “you started too soon”, “you were politically motivated”, rather than admitting all parties failed to give Ottawa, on a timely basis, a real first class no-fault LRT system that works.

In addition, Infrastructure Ontario and the city transit union take opposite tacks in their closing statements on the merits of the P3 model that clearly did not work out. The fallout includes the city of Ottawa-RTG parties, still in court, at each others' throats, demanding money - our money.

My contribution as a party with limited standing at the LRT Inquiry, provided without expecting any remuneration, was to point out just how hard, in my experience with the city and RTG, it was to gain access to LRT documents.

Ottawa, provincial, federal and corporate parties and their paid counsels all paying lip service to transparency at the Inquiry was a bit rich to hear being put forward.

Instead, those pious, self-serving parties all engaged in excessive secrecy, stalling release of a few partly exempt records, even hiding records – all that made and still does the public and the right to know the losers.

No one then, hopefully, should dispute that one underlying reason why the LRT system failed, was demonstrable, because of its lack of full transparency.

The public LRT Inquiry should confirm this in its November report. That's contrary to some parties alleging the Inquiry itself became the problem by pressing them too hard for too many answers.

Yes, the public and private sector, the city and RTG, involved in the multi-billion dollar LRT, you ARE on trial for your unforgivable mistakes and if only you can get charged as such.

That lack of transparency is most definitely tied too to a lack of parties' accountability and to lack of

strong regulation and oversight. That's even though all parties claimed they acted responsibly and without negligence or had the interests of taxpayers and the public at heart and did not need any oversight.

Hardly anyone has been fired, forced to resign and instead some of those leaving have or will be getting publicly paid for severances.

No one, it seems, is in a conflict of interest, however close their ties to developers who benefited from the LRT system and especially those developers building high rise condo at politically-chosen LRT stations.

Instead all such parties praise their shoddy work and throw mud at others.

The very sad part is that Ottawa is stuck with a second-rate, permanently-plagued LRT system that may not attract the very transit riders sought.

Residents are stuck paying for the LRT fiasco and may tune out when it comes to other expensive needed multi-billion projects such as properly planned affordable housing and more acquired and retained green space.

We could have done better, much better. Yes, an inquiry and an on-going inquiry and much more oversight is needed on stage 1, 2 and 3 or we'll strike out again and again.

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