

Community Care

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CL-C 179-2021



November 17, 2021

Office of the Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, Ontario L2V 4T7

Re: Moving Transit Forward

Dear Members of Niagara Regional Council,

At Community Care, our team knows that households can save money by using public transport, but when many low-income households are situated in car-dependent areas where transit is poor, fragmented or completely inaccessible, it can create almost insurmountable barriers to escaping poverty and hardship. Lack of affordable transportation to access to basic services, including healthcare, jobs, groceries and other needs, can entrench people in a cycle of poverty.

Transportation is about more than just moving people from one point to another. When integrated and well funded, it is a system that can expand opportunities available to people based on where they live and make life easier for those struggling to make ends meet. In a recent Harvard study, commute time was identified as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty. The longer a commute time, the worse the chances of low-income families escaping poverty.

Since 1919, our agency has been providing programs and support to people experiencing food and housing insecurity. Community Care's main operations are in St. Catharines and Thorold, but we also work in partnership with government, other agencies and community organizations across Niagara to deliver programs and services related to housing, income support and food security. Service-delivery in our sector has moved towards partnership and integration because we recognize that the people living and traveling across Niagara who access our programs deserve the same levels of service no matter where they live. We also believe government has a role in investing in the necessary infrastructure to help people move from poverty and towards a better life.

A fully integrated, regionalized public transit system, built in concert with transit-supportive developments that include affordable housing, is critical for creating a path out of poverty for thousands of people in our community.

It is for these reasons that I write to you in full support of a consolidated transit model. I see the benefits of integration and believe that a well funded, regionalized transit system would be a major step towards social and economic prosperity for Niagara residents, especially those who rely on our services.

Community Care applauds the efforts of Niagara's politicians, municipal staff, the Linking Niagara Transit Committee and advocates and we thank you for your work on moving transit forward.

Many thanks,

Betty-Lou Souter, OMC,LLD,BAS

CEO



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Niagara Region Clerk's Office

Original to: Nov 25 Council

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