

February 17, 2016

Dear Colleagues and Students:

There has been a lot of interest in **Shift** – London's plan for rapid transit – and its potential impact on our campus. I am pleased to use this newsletter to update our community on the most recent developments regarding this important issue.

We have been working closely with the City of London on this matter and we continue to support rapid transit in principle as a way of getting students, staff and faculty to campus safely, reliably and efficiently. At the same time, when evaluating the possible routes, we have been looking carefully at the future needs of our university, protection of our academic and research facilities, and the safety of all those who use our campus. When evaluating transit options, we have been considering them with the following principles and objectives in mind:

1. Moving students to campus safely, reliably and efficiently
2. Ensuring safety for all campus community members, especially pedestrian safety
3. Respecting Western's collegiate gothic vistas and architecture
4. Reducing cut-through traffic
5. Creating car-free zones
6. Mitigating large incremental costs
7. Avoiding disruption of academic and research activities (during or after implementation)
8. Rationalizing transit routes on to campus
9. Respecting Western's Campus Master Plan principles and initiatives

We are currently evaluating two routes proposed by the City. We are looking at possible electro-magnetic interference, vibrations, noise and other potential impacts on our facilities located near the proposed routes and whether there would be a rationalization of current traffic through campus, both car and bus. We have met with many campus stakeholders, including USC, SOGS, Campus Council, Deans, Assistant Deans of Research and the Leaders Forum. To ensure we consult widely with all campus members, we are also hosting two town hall meetings:

- Tuesday, February 23 at 10:00 am in UCC 315 (USC Council Chambers)
- Wednesday, February 24 at 1:00 pm in UCC 290 (McKellar Room)

To better understand current traffic patterns, we commissioned a study in December to look at the movement of pedestrians, buses and cars through our campus. Some interesting findings emerged from this study, including the fact that there are streets on our campus handling traffic volumes similar to streets in large cities. At some intersections we have 1,000 pedestrians per hour crossing into campus. We also found that over 40% of cars that enter campus leave within 3-7 minutes, which indicates a high volume of cut-through traffic that likely has no business to transact on campus.

When the City engaged us in this process we set up a working group to look at the implications from a technical point of view and to assess the viability of possible routes through campus. The working group is also looking at future car-free zones on campus and ways to reduce traffic through campus, including vehicles that simply use our roads to cut through and do not have business on campus. We have created a website where you can get further information, maps of potential routes and give us your feedback: http://www.uwo.ca/ipb/publicaccountability/rapid_transit.html. I encourage you to email your comments directly to transit@uwo.ca and participate in the February 23/24 town halls.

Sincerely,

Amit Chakma
President & Vice-Chancellor