



OPEN LETTER TO YORK REGION COUNCILLORS IT'S TIME FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT IN YORK REGION

The ongoing labour dispute with the private contractors charged with delivering transit service to residents of York Region continues. It is clear that the private operators have no incentive to settle the strike, and that York Region Council is satisfied to see thousands of residents denied transit service.

On November 17th, York Region put out a news release that noted:

"We heard from union leaders today that wage parity with GTA peers is not the expectation; rather improvement in the wage gap is the realistic goal. Given this observation, and in light of wage offers that have emerged, it would appear both parties are in a position to resume meaningful negotiations."

And yet, the contractors have not moved in any significant way from their "final offer" that led to the strike – one that continues to underpay transit workers some \$7/hour below all other jurisdictions in the GTA. This is certainly a recipe for ongoing problems. No York Region politician would consider paying police or firefighters a dramatically lower salary – why is it acceptable for transit workers?

Over many decades, York Region and each of its municipalities have successfully bargained collective agreements with their own employees without a single strike. So why is this so hard to settle? There is one simple reason – the presence of private operators that are huge multinational companies answerable to CEO's outside of Canada. Their profit margin comes first – far ahead of the interests of the people of York Region.

It is time to remove these middlemen that have no concern for the people of this region, and create a truly **public transit system**. One that is accountable to the public, and run in the interests solely of the public. One where everyone can see that every public dollar goes to improved service, not some profit line reported in another country.

Transit riders, residents and families of operators without work continue to be the unfortunate and unnecessary victims of this situation. The Labour Council calls on York Region Council to do that right thing – cancel the contracts of the private operators for failure to deliver the service agreed to, and set up a truly public system for Canada's most dynamic growing region.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Cartwright".

John Cartwright
President

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