

RE – LRT BOARDING ESTIMATE

PRELIMINARY

The following findings frightened me so much I felt I had to do something to stop the LRT proposal. I hope they will have the same effect on you.

Except for the capital cost, the whole cost/benefit structure supporting LRT is based ultimately on the number of boarders it attracts. If that estimate is wrong, all the other estimates are wrong – job creation, land values, subsidies, taxes, etc.

The population of the region is estimated to reach 729,000 in 2031. However, virtually all users will come from metro K-W whose population is estimated to reach 462,000 in 2031 (see memo to Planning and Works Committee 7/2/06 Report P-06-016). This is the number that should be used in relation to LRT and the one I shall use.

THE CURRENT BOARDING ESTIMATE 2031

The current estimate of LRT boardings in 2031 is 56,000. (See memo to Council, 23/12/09 File No. D10-40)

ACTUAL LRT BOARDINGS

City	Population	Boardings
DALLAS	4.5M	57,400
DENVER	2.9M	42,600
BALTIMORE	2.7M	34,000
HOUSTON	2.3M	35,000
CHARLOTTE	1.8M	20,200
PHOENIX	1.4M	37,000
SEATTLE	1.1M	26,600
KW	462K (est)	56,000 (est)

I urge you to look at the complete list of boardings at “[wikipedia.org/wiki/list of united states light rail systems by ridership](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_united_states_light_rail_systems_by_ridership)”.

With about half the population, why should KW have 30,000 more boardings per day than Seattle? With about one sixth the population of Denver, why should KW have 13,000 more boardings per day?

The chart clearly shows that the daily boardings for KW LRT are overestimated by tens of thousands, and therefore the annual subsidies will be underestimated by millions.

AN ALTERNATE BOARDING ESTIMATE

With about one half the population of Seattle, it might be expected KW boardings would be about half, 13,300. With about one third the population of Phoenix, it might be expected KW would have about one third the boardings, 12,000.

In the next twenty years the population of KW is expected to rise from the present 340K to 462K, about 36%. At present iXpress boardings are about 10,000 daily. If it is assumed boardings will increase by, say, 50% over the next twenty years (which seems much more reasonable than the 560% increase forecast), boardings would be about 15,000 in 2031.

These numbers point to daily boardings in the neighbourhood of 15,000 in 2031, rather than 56,000.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The estimated daily boardings of 56,000 in 2031 are overstated by at least 40,000.
2. Just like every city in North America with a population of less than 1M, KW will not need the LRT or BRT to cope with its public transit needs now or when the population reaches 462,000 in 2031.
3. If LRT is installed, the numbers show it will be a financial disaster. With 15,000 daily boardings rather than the estimated 57,000, subsidies will skyrocket over those forecast. In 2002, after 24 years Edmonton's LRT had 36,000 boardings with an annual subsidy of \$13.7M (see "ETS Light Rail Transit" bulletin). With less than half the boardings, the region's subsidy will be about \$21.7M instead of the \$3.8M forecast (see 'Connecting to the Future' Summer 2009).

DAVID RAMSAY
#517 100 CAROLINE ST S.
WATERLOO, ON
N2L 1X4