



For Immediate Release

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**The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network asks municipal candidates their position on an integrated regional transit system.
Over 90% of respondents are in favour**

Niagara Region - As Niagara residents get ready to head to the polls on October 27, 2014 the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) Transportation Working Group wants to know municipal candidates' position on a regional integrated transit system.

The NPRN represents 30 plus organizations working collectively to wipe out poverty in Niagara through information sharing, changing attitudes, and compelling Niagara citizens to get involved and take action.

The NPRN Transportation Working Group, one of five of the Network's working tables, believes that an integrated regional transit system is critical to the health and well-being of Niagara residents and our future economic growth and prosperity.

On September 12, 2014 the working group gathered the names and emails of municipal candidates who registered for the upcoming municipal elections in Niagara and sent out an email asking whether they support a regional integrated transit system. If yes, they were asked how do you think we should move forward on this issue? If no, they were asked why not?

285 candidates were asked and 81 responses were received. No one was against an integrated regional transit system, five were undecided, two did not directly respond to the question, and the remaining 74 acknowledged that Niagara needs integrated regional transit.

According to Rick Merritt, convenor of the NPRN, "we analysed the feedback and identified some emerging themes." For example, several candidates said that transit should be cost effective, dependable and efficient for riders. Some see a need for public and private partnerships, and a single commission instead of three major providers.

Many see it as important to poverty reduction and an economic driver that will create access to jobs.

"It was also nice to hear that some of the candidates understand that not all people can afford transit, especially seniors, students and people with disabilities," say Merritt. Respondents suggested we need a subsidy for some riders, a goal the Transportation Working Group has been discussing," he added.

We also heard that the implementation of an integrated public transit system presents some challenges for smaller communities and that we need to design a system that services all communities. "We couldn't agree more," says Merritt.

Not surprisingly many candidates recognized that an integrated public transit is integral to GO train expansion. “We are definitely unified on this position in Niagara,” stated Merritt.

For more information on the NPRN, including the work of the Transportation Working Group, visit the website at www.wipeoutpoverty.ca. You can also follow the NPRN on Facebook and Twitter.

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