

# EDITORIAL

## Mediators ought to be elected

When it comes to how tax dollars are spent at the municipal and provincial level, there has been some progress in the discourse. Problem is, it has come at a high cost.

For anyone following local politics over the last 10 years or more, they will notice a gradual shift away from blaming high taxes – or at least the predominant perception of high taxes – on social services. It used to be spun to the taxpayer that services cost money and, of course, no one opposes core services such as road clearing and emergency services.

So taxes kept going up.

Then a gradual shift was made to discussing salaries and benefits of those who deliver those services, namely public servants. It eventually became a truism that public sector workers were paid far in excess of their private counterparts. Some – namely public union leaders – still try to claim otherwise, but public opinion is largely on the side of private workers.

Yet taxes keep going up.

When the issue of wages among public sector unions is brought before a politician, say West Carleton Coun. Eli El-Chantiry, there is often a sigh and a shug of the shoulders. They are powerless, because every time it goes to mediation the largely inscrutable mediators rule based on the latest precedent. And the spiral continues.

It is time the crucial position of mediator be democratized. It is time mediators were elected.

## THE BOYS OF SUMMER

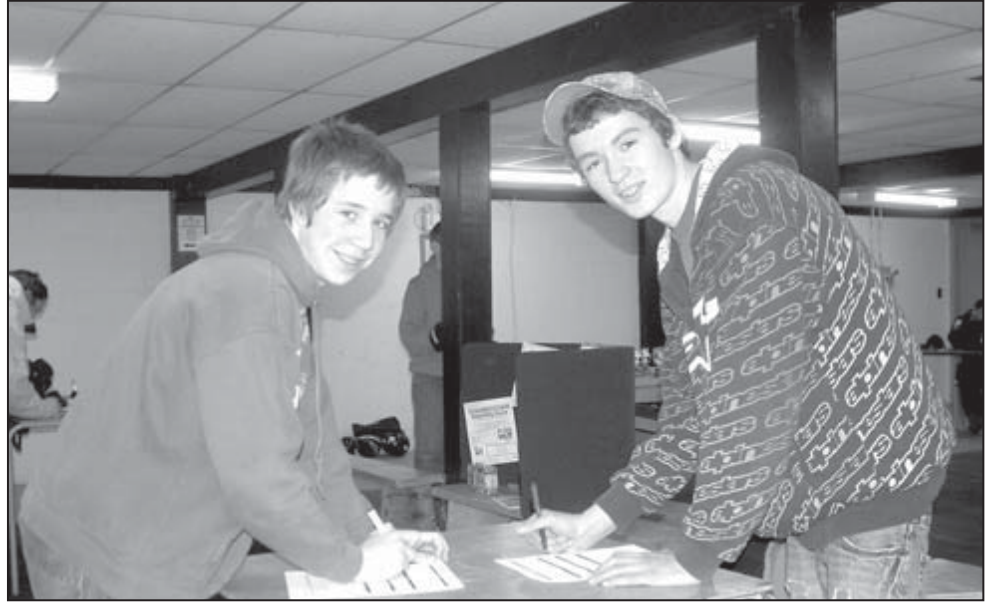


Photo by Sherry Haaima  
Spring/summer sports registration was in full swing at the Fitzroy Harbour Community Centre on Saturday, March 27. Above, brothers Braydon Carroll, right, and Jason Carroll get signed up for minor soccer.

## West Carleton Review

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Consider a tax on vehicles in city's core

To the editor:

OCTranspo versus taking the car seems to be a constant mantra heard across the city. One side says if service doesn't improve or be increased (except cost wise) they will switch to their own vehicles while the other side says that they don't have access to transit or it isn't convenient or ...

In Ward 5, we have virtually no OCTranspo service and ParaTranspo, while covering the entire Ward is both prohibitively expensive and rigid. As shown on the city website, Para fares range between \$9.50 and \$18.50 per ONE trip Originating or ending in Ward 5, booked 24 hours in advance, between 7 and 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. where you specify when you would like to go, when you would like to be picked up and where, only to be told if you actually can be scheduled in.

The situation confronting the city is how to increase ridership within the areas served by OCTranspo while also assisting those who do not have easy access to public transit.

My proposal is to task city staff with investigating the type of Congestion Pricing system utilized in London, England and various other Cities throughout the world. Conceptually, the system would utilize passive devices such as transponders and plate imaging cameras to determine if you are allowed to be in a certain area of the city at a certain time. While not stating this model is ideal, or even correct, let me briefly describe once scenario.

For the subject of discussion, the zone runs from Island Park to the Queensway to the Rideau River [not the canal] to the Ottawa River. Traffic on the Queensway/417 is excluded.

Any vehicle which is identified in the 'zone' which resides in an area well served by OC Transpo, and JUST for discussion lets assume anyone who resides [ie has their vehicle license address] within the Zone, Inside the Green-

belt or within 2 km of a transit way station would be an "included vehicle".

A number of cameras would be installed which would capture and translate vehicle plate information and compare it to the contents of a database. If and only if, the plate was identified as belonging to an 'included vehicle' would the status of that vehicle be progressed to the next step which would involve either validating that the vehicle had been prepaid [ie daily, weekly monthly or annually] at say \$10 per weekday [more than 2 OC Rush Hour Fares] or set a timer for the next 24 hours during which at say \$12, the vehicle owner could call and have access granted.

Failing to comply would result in a larger charge, say \$50 being levied. Hours of system operation would be such that say from 6:30 PM Fridays to 5AM Mondays, stat holidays, 10:45 pm to 4:45 am. etc would be exempt so as not to disrupt visitors to the downtown core on the weekends or who need to be downtown well outside peak hours.

A visitor from Toronto would be exempt, as would a resident of New York as well as one from Carp. However, if you live in the Market and need a car, you are stuck with a monthly rate. Live in the Glebe and want to drive to City Hall, you have to pay for the privilege during a weekday too.

I am posting this as a concept, something to generate discussion. If you have a better idea, PLEASE share it with me or other candidates who are looking to better the city. The City, Mayor and Council can not maintain the Status Quo.

Yes, there are issues to be analyzed.: What about Residents on the Quebec side of the river who live in the NCR; What is the cost benefit analysis [cost of cameras/software/Call Centre versus revenue] are but two of I am sure many issues.

Alexander Aronec  
Ward 5 election candidate