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RTG 'CONFIDENT' IT WILL COMPLETE LRT BY MARCH 31; MANCONI NOT CONVINCED



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TED RAYMOND

Tuesday, February 12th 2019 - 11:29 am



Photo: Transportation GM John Manconi (centre) speaks to the Finance and Economic Development Committee flanked by RTG CEO Peter Lauch (close) and LRT Construction Director Michael Morgan (far) Feb. 12, 2019. (CTV Ottawa)

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RTG 'confident' it will complete LRT by March 31; Manconi not convinced

The CEO of the Rideau Transit Group says he is confident the \$2.1 billion light rail transit system will be ready to hand over to the City of Ottawa by March 31.

Peter Lauch told the City's Finance and Economic Development Committee Tuesday he does not foresee any other scenario.

"We don't contemplate any other scenario than handover the 31st of March," he said. "We have a very committed contractor; we have a very committed vehicle supplier, so I am still confident we will meet our obligation and hand over on the 31st of March."

But Transportation General Manager John Manconi says he's far from convinced.

"I am concerned about March 31st," he said. "There's only days to get to March 31st. I'm happy to be wrong, but I'm highly skeptical that they're going to achieve March 31st."

Manconi points to eight items that he says are critical to the LRT system being ready that must still be completed.

"We're down to eight things to complete this \$2.1 billion, state-of-the-art LRT project," he told FEDCO near the start of the meeting.

"The first: you need your fleet. We need 15 double-vehicles running from end-to-end to provide peak-hour service and then there are 4 single vehicles that are needed for spares. RTG and Alstom have some work to do in that regard to get that fleet availability count to where it needs to be.

"Station occupancy: I think that's imminent. Mr. Lauch and his team have been working with building services and we think that we'll have station occupancy very soon, certainly in the east and then head in a westerly direction.

"The tunnel ventilation system: these are very critical, life-saving systems in the event of smoke or fire in the tunnel ... There's rigorous testing; there are three critical elements we've asked RTG to complete and they're working on that to provide us that information.

"The testing of the train control system: It's progressing very, very well. There are some final tests and protocols that need to be signed off on by Thales [Rail Solutions] and by RTG and then that completes that part of the regime, so there's progress on that front.

"The operations and monitoring control system: that's fed into our control room. That's so our operators can see the trains, the fans, the customer-facing elements and can make adjustments on the fly as they need to, to provide that integrated mobility to bus, ParaTranspo and the diesel train system.

"The final tests of the power system: there are some final checks and balances RTG is doing there.

"Number seven is very, very important. This is the one that will make us all sleep well at night and that's the independent safety auditor signing off on a very rigorous system assurance plan. That's thousands of pages of documents signed off by engineers, mechanical engineers, system engineers, track specialists, where that information is provided to us and is signed off to ensure the system is safe. That's another check that's been built into the contractual requirements.

"And number eight: This is the practice plan. RTG has offered to do practice planning; they're not contractually obligated to do it, but running end-to-end 15 double-trains so they can get ready for some critical tests that lead to revenue service availability. We think that's an important element that needs to occur. Unfortunately, that has not occurred because of the fleet count but we're looking forward to them achieving that one."

RTG says it plans to do a 12-consecutive day test run starting on the second week of March.

Manconi says if RTG is able to meet all of these requirements and hand over a robust system by March 31, he expects riders will be on board by the end of April.

"If they achieve March 31st, we need about two weeks of prep work, and then we can get into launch mode, so by the end of April, we're launching."

But Manconi says he will not accept a system that does not meet the standards the City demands.

"I'm not suggesting RTG is proposing this but there's no way – unless I'm directed by Council – to accept a subpar system," he said. "To RTG's credit, everything they're building and once it gets done and tested and commissioned, it's state-of-the-art, it's top notch, it's right up there, but they have to understand that this system has to be very, very robust for those 325,000 customers that we move around every single day.

"We'll not have a second chance to launch," Manconi said.

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Labour Council concerned about flooding in LRT tunnel (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/labour-council-concerned-about-flooding-in-lrt-tunnel-1.8475653>)

The Ottawa and District Labour Council is raising new concerns about the LRT tunnel: flooding.

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CFRA's Andrew Pinsent weighs in on the 2021 election campaign.

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An outdoor concert at Lansdowne Park later this month will feature rapid COVID-19 screening and could serve as a dry run for larger concerts later this year.

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COVID-19 outbreak at Valley Stream Retirement Residence claims four lives (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/covid-19-outbreak-at-valley-stream-retirement-residence-claims-four-lives-1.14390024>)

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A cloudy day after a 21 cm dumping of snow (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/a-cloudy-day-after-a-21-cm-dumping-of-snow-1.14389867>)

A cloudy sky will hang overhead as Ottawa cleans out from a blast of winter weather.

(<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/active-covid-19-cases-and-hospitalizations-in-ottawa-drop-on-sunday-123-new-cases-1-new-death-1.14389519>)

Active COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Ottawa drop on Sunday; 123 new cases, 1 new death

(<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/active-covid-19-cases-and-hospitalizations-in-ottawa-drop-on-sunday-123-new-cases-1-new-death-1.14389519>)

Ottawa Public Health is reporting 123 more people in the city have tested positive for COVID-19 and one more resident has died.

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Temporary cut to vaccine shipments 'a setback' but Watson hopeful for summer (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/temporary-cut-to-vaccine-shipments-a-setback-but-watson-hopeful-for-summer-1.14388822>)

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson says recent news that shipments of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine to Canada would be temporarily cut in half is a setback, but...

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Active COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations climb as Ottawa reports 136 new cases Saturday

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(<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/active-covid-19-cases-and-hospitalizations-climb-as-ottawa-reports-136-new-cases-saturday-1.14381975>)

Ottawa Public Health is reporting 136 more people in Ottawa have tested positive for COVID-19 and four more people are in the hospital.

(<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/ottawa-police-investigating-first-homicide-of-2021-1.14381941>)

Ottawa police investigating first homicide of 2021 (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/ottawa-police-investigating-first-homicide-of-2021-1.14381941>)

Ottawa police are investigating the overnight shooting death of a man in Ottawa's south end.

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Expansion of landfill gas collection project finishes under budget (<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/expansion-of-landfill-gas-collection-project-finishes-under-budget-1.14191026>)

The project installed 12 new wells, to the already existing 28 wells at the site, over a fourth-month period.

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