

## **The FACTS about Rapid Transit in Waterloo Region**

**Rapid transit in Waterloo Region is generating a great deal of discussion in our community. The purpose of this document is to provide some additional information about the project based on the questions we receive from the public.**

### **Why does Waterloo Region need rapid transit?**

The Province of Ontario, through the Places to Grow legislation, mandated the Waterloo Region to plan for major population growth – a population increase of 200,000 by 2031. Through the Regional Growth Management Strategy and the new Regional Official Plan, the Region has put policies in place to help direct up to 45% of new growth to our built up urban areas. Rapid transit is an important part of this plan, and Regional Council chose it as the most sustainable solution to move people and shape our community.

### **Why can't more roads solve the congestion problem?**

Building new or bigger roads won't ease traffic congestion – it just attracts more cars. With limited room to expand or build new roads in our urban areas, road expansion is not a sustainable option to manage future growth. If the Region continues with current trends of auto use, the road network will need to expand by at least 500 additional lane-kilometres of traffic by 2031, at a cost of \$1.4 to \$1.5 billion. Rapid transit and improved transit will not eliminate the need for road improvements. But road expansion costs would be reduced by \$400 to \$500 million.

### **Why can't we just keep using iXpress?**

iXpress works well now, and has experienced significant ridership growth since it was introduced, but it is already experiencing traffic delays from road congestion. As ridership continues to grow, the capacity of iXpress will not be enough to meet travel demand. The Region's transportation vision for the future includes an expanded and realigned Grand River Transit system, with a series of new express routes modeled after iXpress, and expanded local service that would feed into and integrate with rapid transit. A public consultation process will be used to establish these new express routes.

### **What's the current state of funding for rapid transit?**

On June 28, 2010, the Province of Ontario committed \$300 million towards the capital cost of constructing a rapid transit system in Waterloo Region. On September 2, 2010, the Government of Canada committed one-third of the eligible costs, up to \$265 million to support the construction of the Region's rapid transit project. The Region will be responsible for covering the remaining construction costs, as well as the ongoing operating costs.

## **Will riders outside of rapid transit station areas have good transit service?**

Our proposed rapid transit system is based on rapid transit and conventional bus service working together. There will be bus stops in between and at the rapid transit stops along the Central Transit Corridor (CTC). GRT service will continue along the rapid transit route as well, to provide frequent stops at intermediate locations. New iXpress-style routes and cross-town routes will also be added, both feeding to rapid transit and serving destinations outside the rapid transit station areas.

## **Is Waterloo Region's population big enough to support Light Rail Transit (LRT)?**

Yes. When Calgary first started building LRT in 1978, it had a population of 506,000. The population of Edmonton was just over 445,000 when the City started LRT construction in 1974. Currently, Waterloo Region has a population of 543,000. By 2031 and with the approved rapid transit staging option, it is expected that approximately 68,000 residents and 110,000 jobs will be concentrated within 600 meters of rapid transit stations.

Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo are fortunate to have employment and population concentrated in a linear corridor connecting the three cities. This makes operation of transit more efficient with passengers located along the route in both directions.

## **What will happen to the street events like Oktoberfest and Buskers once rapid transit is built?**

They will still happen! A parade can still go down King Street. Regional staff will work with organizing committees to accommodate parades along the route. During events, service can short-turn to leave the parade area clear, but still provide service to the crowds of people coming to the parade.

## **How will the construction of the rapid transit system impact roads, traffic and access to local businesses?**

Construction will be completed in stages, to limit the impacts of construction on any one area to a short period of time. Every effort will be made to maintain the flow of traffic and access to businesses in construction areas. A communication plan will be put in place to inform the public, business owners, and property owners regarding timing for construction in each area, access options, alternate routes, etc.

## **How will rapid transit be separated from traffic?**

Both BRT and LRT would operate primarily on a dedicated rapidway. By operating separately from traffic, rapid transit is a more efficient, reliable, comfortable, convenient, and effective way to travel. As we work on detailed design of the system, a platform or curb could be used to keep the rapid transit vehicle separate from other traffic, as has been done in Toronto along St. Clair West. Fencing will not be used.