The story of rapid transit in Waterloo Region
The Region of Waterloo continues to grow. With a current population of 550,000, we are the fourth largest community in Ontario and the tenth largest in Canada.

Over the next 20 years, growth will continue as we expect 200,000 new residents to move to our community. In fact, the Province recently increased its population projection for Waterloo Region, from 729,000 to 742,000 by 2031 (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe). These projections are on track as nearly 10,000 new residents move to the region each year.

Where will these 200,000 people live and how will they travel in and around our community? Our traditional pattern of suburban sprawl and single-occupancy car travel is not sustainable as we prepare to add the equivalent of another Kitchener to the region. Waterloo Region recognizes the need to look at new and improved ways to prepare for the future of our community.

The Region, together with the Province – through its Places to Grow legislation – is encouraging development and growth within existing urban areas. By focusing development and investment in the core, Waterloo Region can build up, instead of out: limiting urban sprawl and protecting the environment.

Moving people more efficiently in and around our community, limiting urban sprawl and saving our farmland through the protection and preservation of the environment are three of the fundamental goals of ION.

ION will also help local businesses attract new talent to the region, assist with job creation and stimulate new business growth.
Why do we need ION?

Limit urban sprawl and protect farmland

- Some of the best farmland in Ontario lies just outside our urban areas. ION safeguards the region’s precious agricultural lands and preserves the community’s natural beauty by intensifying the core areas of the community and limiting urban sprawl.
- Most of the region’s water supply comes from groundwater. Much of this groundwater is located just outside the western edges of Kitchener and Waterloo. By encouraging growth inward and limiting urban sprawl, ION will help protect the region’s groundwater sources.
- ION helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions for better air quality.
- ION maintains the unique rural and urban lifestyle that we enjoy in our community.
- ION is shaping the community for the future by encouraging development in core areas.
- The Region is focused on building up, instead of out.
Why do we need ION?

- ION is inspiring new residential and business investments
  - Construction can already be seen along the rapid transit corridor, with new projects continuously being added with new developments such as 1 Victoria and the Red Condos selling out before completion
  - For the first time in the past decade, more apartments and townhomes are being built in Waterloo Region than single family homes.

- The Region’s Official Plan aims to balance growth between subdivisions and existing built-up areas
  - This is a major departure from the past where nearly all new growth took place in subdivisions or single-family homes
  - A noticeable new trend has emerged in the region in the past decade: we have shifted from having about 15 per cent development in existing built-up areas in 2003 to having more than 50 per cent development in existing built-up areas in 2011

- ION is encouraging better use of land and efficient use of existing services and infrastructure
  - More compact, intensified development means it’s easier and more cost-effective for the Region and the Cities to provide services to residents, for example: water, sewer, waste, emergency services

- ION will foster a strong economy by stimulating growth and revitalization

- Project developers openly attribute their projects to the rapid transit corridor
Why do we need ION?

Move people

- ION will offer residents a new transportation choice: light rail transit (LRT) in two stages
- With Grand River Transit (GRT), ION will create an efficient, integrated, easy-to-use public transit system for all residents in Waterloo Region
  - New iXpress routes for convenient crosstown travel
  - Increased local bus service and improved frequency in neighbourhoods
  - One fare for all GRT and ION services
- Current ridership demands it
  - GRT has already achieved its ridership target for 2016 – four years ahead of schedule – with ridership now at 22 million per year
  - Ridership on iXpress and Route 7 (that travel between the transit terminals at Conestoga Mall and Fairview Park Mall) is at 20,000 rides per day, which is quickly closing in on the 2017 ION daily ridership target of 25,000 rides per day.
- Without ION, the Region would need to build 500 new lane kilometres of roads over the next 20 years to accommodate expected growth
  - These new roads – the equivalent of 25 Hespeler Roads – would cost $1.4 billion and would need to be built through existing neighbourhoods
  - The impact to roads such as Westmount Road and Courtland Avenue would cause significant social and environmental disruption as well as change the nature of these established neighbourhoods
- Building ION allows the Region to reduce the need for new roads and reduce new road construction costs by approximately 40 per cent or $500 million
- With ION, the Region will ease traffic congestion – now, and in the future – by strategically building roads that efficiently connect a variety of transportation modes
- ION helps the community strike a better balance between daily car and transit use
Yes we do! Here’s why:

- Without ION, 500 new lane kilometres of roadways are needed to accommodate growth
  - The cost is approximately $1.4 billion and Regional taxpayers are responsible for 100 per cent of these costs
- Building ION allows the Region to reduce its new road construction costs by approximately 40 per cent or $500 million
- Without ION, more dependence will be placed on our roads, increasing the need for expansion and improvement
- Roadway infrastructure costs are funded entirely by the Region
- More than two-thirds of the capital costs to build ION will be paid for by the Ontario ($300 million) and Canadian ($265 million) governments
  - The Region will contribute $253 million to build ION
- Without ION, a significant amount of land would be required by the Region to accommodate expansion and growth, including new roads or road widenings through established neighbourhoods
  - This land would come from established neighbourhoods where communities are already struggling with competing priorities for space
  - It is not certain that these roads could even be built or expanded within our Region and our rising population would lead to unmanageable gridlock throughout our community
- Road improvements and expansions do not offer the same level of development opportunities that the current investment in ION does
What’s in it for me?

Whether you live in one of the townships, one of our downtown areas, or a suburb in Cambridge, Kitchener or Waterloo, ION provides plenty of benefits for you and helps us preserve our quality of life and unique urban/rural mix.

In suburban areas

• Development along the ION corridor will help limit overall traffic congestion and cut-through traffic in existing neighbourhoods – now, and into the future
• ION will reduce the need to expand roads and limit the amount of infrastructure required to provide Regional and City services such as water, sewer and fire, making it more effective to provide these services to all residents
• Along with Grand River Transit, ION will create an efficient, easy-to-use public transit system
  ° New iXpress routes for convenient crosstown travel
  ° Increased local bus service and improved frequency in neighbourhoods
  ° One fare for all GRT and ION services
• Without ION, 500 lane kilometres of roadway (approximately 25 Hespeler Roads) are needed to accommodate growth in Waterloo Region
  ° The cost is approximately $1.4 billion and Regional taxpayers are responsible for 100 per cent of these road costs
• Building ION allows the Region to reduce the need for new roads and limit roadway costs by approximately 40 per cent or $500 million
• ION reduces the need to build or widen roads through established neighbourhoods

In city centres

• ION will offer residents a new transportation choice
• New business, residential and commercial developments along the ION corridor will create prosperous and connected communities
• ION will help the community strike a better balance between daily car and transit use
  ° By opening day in 2017, more than 36,000 people will live within 600 metres of an ION stop, and 64,000 people will work within the same area
• ION will reduce traffic congestion

In rural areas

• By encouraging development in existing urban areas, the region’s agricultural lands, natural beauty and rural lifestyle will remain preserved
• ION protects the countryside and ensures locally-grown food products are always available
• Low-emission, shared transportation protects the environment and improves air quality
Planning for ION

The 2011 decision by Council to implement LRT was made following six years of technical studies and an extensive, unprecedented public consultation process.

The idea of a rapid transit corridor in Waterloo Region is deep-rooted and was first presented in 1976, when it was highlighted in the Regional Official Policies Plan.

Planning began after the Region assumed responsibility for transit in 2000 and three years after this, in 2003, the Region included rapid transit in its Growth Management Strategy.

As part of its Places to Grow Plan in 2006, the Province of Ontario mandated the Region to plan for major population growth. With little opportunity to expand the road network in core areas, Council chose to examine rapid transit as the most sustainable solution to meet the community’s transportation needs.

In 2011, with support from the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada, and following the completion of extensive public consultation, Council approved LRT in two stages.
Comparing transit options

The Region began a Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2006 to identify the best possible rapid transit system for Waterloo Region. In 2007, staff developed a number of criteria to evaluate the 10 rapid transit technologies and their associated route designs. Based on the results of the evaluation, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and LRT were short-listed as they had the greatest potential to:

- Support the Region’s development and intensification objectives
- Manage the use of road and railway corridors to serve major destinations
- Be compatible with existing and planned neighbourhoods

Both technologies had rapid transit stops in generally the same locations. Both required separate and protected rapidways for vehicles, with similar road impacts and property costs. The separate rapidway – for either LRT or BRT – was critical to maximize the speed of the service.

LRT vs. More Buses

Our community faced a fundamental decision in its choice to build rapid transit. As part of the EA, the Region completed a transit technology review and considered both BRT and LRT in its analysis. This involved a review of the North American experience over the past 25 years and extensive public consultation.

The study concluded that LRT was the preferred technology for the following reasons:

- LRT was much more likely to achieve the objectives of the Region’s Growth Management Strategy than BRT
- LRT has a higher capital and net operating cost than BRT, but provides significantly greater benefits
- LRT vehicles can carry more passengers – the full standing capacity of standard and articulated buses is approximately 75-115 passengers compared with up to 400 passengers on a two-car train
- LRT has a greater potential to attract transit ridership than BRT – it’s faster, quieter and offers a more comfortable ride
- LRT helps shape the community – it’s a stronger catalyst for development and investment than BRT as LRT infrastructure is viewed as more permanent, as buses can be moved, limiting long-term development
- LRT is a proven influence on land values and is recognized as a planning tool that can support and encourage the development of more sustainable land use patterns
- The number of buses required to meet ridership demand by 2031 would overwhelm the system north of the transit terminal at Fairview Park Mall
Staged LRT to Cambridge

In 2011, Regional Council approved the implementation of LRT from Waterloo to Cambridge as the choice for rapid transit. Council approved a staged approach to LRT – similar to what other communities have done when building rapid transit projects.

Stage 1 includes LRT from Kitchener to Waterloo as well as adapted Bus Rapid Transit (aBRT) from Cambridge to Kitchener. Stage 2 will see the aBRT route converted to LRT, creating a 37 kilometre route of LRT across the three urban centres.

The staged approach to LRT was selected, in part, because of lower ridership south of the transit terminal at Fairview Park Mall and the capital costs were too high to build the entire system at one time. Only the Kitchener to Waterloo ridership numbers were substantial enough to secure initial funding from the provincial and federal governments.

In an effort to increase ridership south of the transit terminal at Fairview Park Mall, Regional Council approved the allocation of $1 million per year for 10 years to enhance ridership and encourage development along the aBRT corridor in Cambridge.

The Region’s ultimate goal is to implement a full LRT service moving people throughout Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo.

- ION aBRT service is the first step towards bringing LRT to Cambridge
- A staged approach, moving from aBRT to LRT, is the most cost-effective way to match transit with current and projected daily ridership as well as development along the corridor
- In 2011, Regional Council committed to investing $1 million per year for 10 years to enhance ridership and encourage development along the ION corridor in Cambridge
- In preparation for Stage 2 ION, the Region will begin public engagement on the selected route and stops in 2014

“Experience in other jurisdictions suggests that LRT has the potential to attract riders that would otherwise refuse to take bus transit.”
– Peer Review Panel, 2011
Expert panel and peer reviews

Third party experts in the fields of transportation planning, urban planning and policy development twice conducted a review of the Region’s preferred rapid transit technology and staged implementation in 2009 and again in 2011.

Both times, the experts were unanimous in their endorsement of LRT from Waterloo to Cambridge, as an innovative transportation and urban planning solution that will help Waterloo Region achieve its growth management goals.

The panelists included:

- **Dr. Jeff Casello**
  - Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo, specializing in urban transportation systems, transportation modeling, transportation and land use impacts.

- **George Dark**
  - A partner at Urban Strategies Inc., a Toronto-based full-service planning and urban design firm, with an expertise in urban design and landscape architecture.

- **Melanie Hare**
  - A partner at Urban Strategies Inc., a Toronto-based full-service planning and urban design firm, with an expertise in sustainable urban planning and transit-oriented development.

- **Dr. Eric Miller**
  - Professor at the University of Toronto, Director of the Urban Transportation Research and Advancement Centre, Director of the University of Toronto Cities Centre and Chair of the International Association for Travel Behaviour Research.

- **Glenn Miller**
  - Director of Education and Research at the Canadian Urban Institute, a Toronto based non-profit organization dedicated to providing solutions to important issues that have an impact on the quality of life in cities, such as land use, growth management, transportation, economic development and sustainable buildings.

- **Glen Murray**
  - Former Mayor of Winnipeg and chair of the Canadian National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy as well as President of the Canadian Urban Institute.

In their review, the panel noted that the Region may have, in fact, underestimated the benefits of LRT:

“The ability for LRT to catalyze change and focus city-building initiatives over the long term far outweighs the cost difference. LRT should be a long-view project constructed both to take immediate advantage but also as a pre-investment to force positive urban change and economic investment.”

The Panel also encouraged the Region and its residents to think of an investment in rapid transit as “a significant first step in the creation of a robust regional and intercity transit system that will extend to, and connect with, Guelph, Hamilton, Pearson Airport, the GTA and beyond.”

Finally, the panel commended the Region for the significant amount of technical review and analysis completed within the Rapid Transit EA, and noted:

“This creates a strong foundation to understand the feasibility, range of alternatives and implications of this significant investment in rapid transit for Waterloo Region.”
Community input: hearing from residents

Community engagement and public input has been, and will continue to be, a critical part of rapid transit in the Region of Waterloo. During each stage of the process to date, feedback from residents has played a key role in every ION decision.

Between 2006 and 2011, Regional staff hosted more than 150 public outreach events for rapid transit, including presentations, speaking engagements and information booths. Additionally, more than 30 public consultation centres were held.

In 2011, prior to Council’s decision on the implementation of rapid transit, the Region held a variety of community relations activities and events, including:

- 25 public consultation/information centres (2,650 participants)
- 20 consultations with local businesses and agencies (550 participants)
- two formal public input meetings at Council (101 participants)
- a live webcast (139 participants)
- 1,760 written comments from the community

More recently, in 2013, Region staff implemented a wide-range of community relations activities and events aimed at engaging residents, businesses, stakeholders and community groups. Two major events featuring the LRT vehicle highlighted a successful year that also included:

- the Rapid Transit Tradeshow (a partnership with the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge Chambers of Commerce) with participation from more than 50 businesses
- the Small Business Workshop Series (a partnership with the Waterloo Region Small Business Centre) with 92 business owners registering for the first two sessions
- 60 ION presentations to stakeholders, community groups and neighbourhood associations
- 14 public consultation/information centres on a variety of topics (i.e. branding, intersection modifications and ION stop design concepts)
Moving forward

Since Council’s 2011 decision to implement LRT, all the necessary studies have been completed, land has been acquired, design work has been conducted and the procurement process is nearly complete with the announcement of the public-private partner expected soon. This partner will design, build, finance, operate and maintain ION Stage 1 LRT for the next 30 years.

Additionally, major construction in relocating underground utilities such as Bell, Union Gas, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro and Kitchener Utilities has been completed or is currently underway. Early construction projects like the new tunnel under the Conestoga Parkway started last summer, and the burial of Hydro One towers and hydro lines near Fairway Road will start this spring.

Construction of the aBRT service will begin later this year in Cambridge, with the service expected to commence shortly thereafter.
By the numbers in 2013

• 9,185 – number of people the ‘ION the Way’ Facebook promotion reached in July
• 5,516 – number of people who saw the ‘ION is Here’ Facebook post in July
• 4,592 – number of people the ‘IONtoberfest’ Facebook promotion reached in October
• 1,721 – number of residents who toured the LRT vehicle during ‘IONtoberfest’ in October
• 1,366 – number of residents who toured the LRT vehicle in July 2013 following Council’s approval of the LRT vehicle contract with Bombardier
• 211 – number of people who ‘shared,’ ‘liked’ or ‘commented’ on the ‘ION is Here’ Facebook post in July
• 92 – number of businesses who participated in the first two of four, free workshops to prepare businesses for ION construction, offered through the Waterloo Region Small Business Centre in November
• 60 – number of ION presentations rapid transit staff gave throughout the year
• 50 – number of local businesses and organizations who participated in the Rapid Transit Tradeshow in April
• 14 – number of ION-related public consultation/information centres throughout 2013
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Creating a central transit corridor in Waterloo Region is presented in the Regional Official Policies Plan.</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Region of Waterloo assumes responsibility for public transit.</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Council approves the Regional Growth Management Strategy, including a rapid transit system to help manage expected growth, protect the environment and limit urban sprawl (June).</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>The Government of Canada, Government of Ontario and Region of Waterloo jointly announce funding of up to $2.5 million for technical studies and an environmental assessment for rapid transit in the region (May).</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>The Minister of the Environment approves the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference (July).</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>The Government of Ontario releases Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes a rapid transit system in Waterloo Region (June).</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Council approves rapid transit as the preferred transportation strategy for Waterloo Region as part of Phase 1 for the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment (July).</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>The Governments of Canada and Ontario identify rapid transit in Waterloo Region as a priority on which they will work together under Building Canada (July).</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>iXpress service sees a tripling in the number of weekday ridership since 2003 (March).</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Council approves the new Regional Official Plan.</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Council approves light rail transit as the preferred technology for rapid transit in Waterloo Region, along with the route, stop locations and staging plan as part of Phase 2 of the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment.</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>The provincial government commits $300 million towards rapid transit in the Region of Waterloo (June).</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>The federal government commits to funding one-third of rapid transit project costs up to $265 million (September).</td>
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Timeline

2011 The Region approves LRT for Waterloo Region in two stages and approves a funding strategy for the new service (June)

2012 The Region decides to implement rapid transit through a design, build, finance, operate and maintain contract with a public-private partner (February)

2012 Early utility construction begins in preparation for Stage 1 LRT (December)

2013 Rapid transit in Waterloo Region has a name. ION – meaning 'going' in Greek – is officially adopted as the name of the service (April). Five months later, an official logo is approved (September)

2013 The Region agrees to purchase 14 LRT vehicles for Stage 1 LRT from Bombardier (July)

2013 The Region’s Request for Proposal is released to three short-listed teams selected to design, build, finance, operate and maintain ION, following a Request for Qualification process that attracted seven interested teams (May)

2013 The Region’s Request for Proposals closes with submissions received from each of the three short-listed teams (December)

2013 The Region endorses the Community Building Strategy, providing a framework for development along the central transit corridor. It is one of the first strategies of its kind in North America (December)

2014 GRT achieves its ridership target for 2016 – four years ahead of schedule – with 22 million riders per year (January)

2014 Council is scheduled to award the contract to the preferred team to design, build, finance, operate and maintain ION Stage 1 LRT (March)

2014 Construction is scheduled to start on the ION aBRT service, which travels between the Ainslie Street Terminal and Fairview Park Mall (Spring/Summer)

2014 Construction is scheduled to begin on ION LRT service between Kitchener and Waterloo (Summer)

2015 ION aBRT service is scheduled to begin (Spring)

2016 First ION LRT vehicle is scheduled to arrive in Waterloo Region (July)

2017 ION LRT service is scheduled to start (Fall)
ION service

The Region of Waterloo’s rapid transit service is a bold and visionary plan focused on protecting agricultural lands and the environment, limiting urban sprawl and moving people.

Approved by Regional Council in 2011, ION will bring LRT to Waterloo Region in two stages:

- **Stage 1**, scheduled to open in 2017, features a 19 kilometre LRT route from the Grand River Transit (GRT) terminal at Conestoga Mall to the transit terminal at Fairview Park Mall
  - With 16 stops, ION makes it easy for residents to travel between neighbourhoods, schools, major employment areas, events and shopping districts
- **Stage 1** also includes a 17 kilometre adapted Bus Rapid Transit (aBRT) route between Cambridge’s Ainslie Street Terminal and Fairview Park Mall
  - Expected to begin service in 2015, ION features six stops, including four on Hespeler Road
- **Stage 2** will see the Region convert ION aBRT to LRT, creating a seamless 37 kilometre route of 23 ION stops between Cambridge and Waterloo

ION operations

- ION will travel in its own rapidway
  - The vehicles will be separated from car traffic and benefit from traffic signal priority
    - For example: some preference will be given to ION
    - Shortening a red light or lengthening a green light to allow the LRT vehicle to travel through an intersection, in order to remain on-time and on-schedule without disrupting overall traffic flow
- ION will run approximately every eight minutes during rush hour and every 10-15 minutes the rest of the day
  - ION will operate between 5 a.m. and 1 a.m. daily, similar to GRT
- Emergency services vehicles will be able to use the ION rapidway when required
ION stops

- ION aBRT and LRT stops will share a set of common elements
  - Each stop will feature:
    - Functional elements such as ticket vending machines, bike racks and digital displays that tell customers in real-time when the next bus or LRT will arrive
    - Custom elements such as landscaping and art that will link to surrounding neighbourhoods and communities
- Stops will be located near key destinations, major employers, post-secondary schools and neighbourhoods/communities throughout the region, including:
  - Downtown Kitchener, UpTown Waterloo, Galt, Preston, Hespeler
  - Manulife, Sun Life, Grand River Hospital
  - University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University
  - Cambridge Centre, Fairview Park Mall, Waterloo Town Square, Conestoga Mall
- A joint fare system with GRT ensures residents can easily transfer between the bus and rail services at no additional cost

ION vehicles

- The Region’s LRT vehicles (LRVs) are being built by the Canadian company Bombardier
  - The Region has purchased 14 LRVs for ION Stage 1 LRT
- ION LRVs will:
  - Comfortably carry up to 200 customers per vehicle
    - Passengers enter the vehicle via four doors that will open at each stop
    - Doors are located on both sides of the vehicle for easy northbound and southbound travel
    - There are 57 seats in each vehicle, along with plenty of standing room and designated areas for bicycles and those with accessibility needs
    - Be barrier-free and fully-accessible
  - The 100 per cent low floor LRVs are the first of their kind in North America
    - Most LRVs are only 70 per cent low-floor
    - Low-floor LRVs make it easier for customers to enter the vehicle, especially those with strollers, accessibility needs or shopping carts
ION Stage 1 aBRT and Stage 2 LRT
Long-term transportation strategy

ION is a key element of the Region’s Transportation Master Plan (RTMP), which is a coordinated, long-term strategy for investment in all types of travel, including roads, public transit, walking and cycling.

The 19 kilometre ION corridor will form the spine of this efficient, integrated transportation network that will reach out to all corners of the region. Focused on moving people and goods in and around our community, ION will help create a prosperous future for Waterloo Region, assist in attracting new residents and businesses and allow individuals to strike a better balance between their car and transit use.

Grand River Transit (GRT)

To maximize the benefits of ION, GRT will undergo a major network redesign with the goal of creating an easy to use, efficient public transit system for all residents. Following the launch of ION, some GRT buses will be redeployed to other routes, allowing for improved community bus service.

Network redesign features:

- New and expanded iXpress services that link major neighbourhoods to ION as well as establish frequent and efficient transit service to key destinations
- Expanded local and crosstown iXpress services that will transport commuters to and from ION stops
- Increased local bus service and improved frequency for neighbourhoods throughout Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo
- A joint fare system with ION to ensure residents can easily transfer between bus and LRT service at no additional cost
- Improved connections to GO Transit, VIA rail and other inner-city transit options

King/Victoria transit hub

The transit hub, located at the corner of King and Victoria Streets in Downtown Kitchener, will provide connections to street platforms for ION, GRT stops and inter-city transit such as GO Transit and VIA rail. The hub will also link to taxi services and walking and cycling trails.

Walking and cycling trails

Most ION stops are located within close proximity to the region’s vast network of multi-use trails.

- Since 2006, cycling facilities on Regional roads (including on-road bike lanes, multi-use trails, shared lanes and paved shoulders) have nearly doubled from 149 km to 289 km
- Region-wide, the goal is to increase the share of walking and cycling during the afternoon peak hours from 7.8% in 2006 to 12% in 2031. Connections with ION will help make this possible through improved accessibility
Roads

The Region will continue to invest in roads throughout our community. Road improvements, in combination with ION, provide greater connectivity, quality and choice for all residents – no matter what their transportation mode.

Since 2004, a total of 82 road expansion or improvement projects have been completed on Regional roads and bridges, for a total investment of $247 million.

**Some of the most recent investments include:**

- Weber Street Widening and grade separation at railway ($57 million)
- Fairway Road Extension including new bridge across the Grand River ($50 million)
- Ira Needles Boulevard Construction ($35 million)
- Hespeler Road Grade separation at railway ($25 million)
- Maple Grove Road Widening and grade separation at railway ($20 million)
- Townline Road Widening ($13 million)

Additionally, over the next 10 years, there are several major road expansions and improvements planned, for a total investment of more than $200 million.

**These projects include:**

- River Road Extension (approximately $79 million)
- Franklin Boulevard road widening and intersection improvements (approximately $50 million)
- King Street Grade separation at railway (approximately $28 million)
- South Boundary Road (Cambridge) Extension (approximately $17 million)
- Fountain Street reconstruction and replacement of Bridge over the Grand River (approximately $12 million)
- Ira Needles Boulevard Widening (approximately $11 million)
- CanAmera Parkway Widening (approximately $3 million)
How will we pay for ION?

Stage 1 ION capital costs = $818 million
- $300 million – from the Government of Ontario
- $265 million – from the Government of Canada
- $253 million – from the Region of Waterloo

Regional funding strategy
- The Region’s share of the capital, interest and operations and maintenance costs will be paid for from transit fare revenue and incremental property tax increases
- In 2011, Regional Council approved a funding strategy for ION that included annual property tax increases of 1.2 per cent from 2012 to 2018
- These increases will be offset by other property tax reductions so that the annual net increase for ION will average 0.7 per cent from 2012-18. For the average homeowner, the additional annual property tax increase will be approximately $11 per year
- It is hoped that new provincial initiatives may produce additional revenues for rapid transit projects

A public-private partnership
For ION Stage 1 LRT, the Region will partner with a team of experts to design, build, finance, operate and maintain Stage 1 LRT service between Kitchener and Waterloo. The operating contract will be for 10 years (with possible extensions); the maintenance contract will be for 30 years.

During this time, the Region will:
- Own the ION system
- Set fares, in coordination with GRT
- Set the frequency of service – how often the train comes during the day
- Collect all fare revenue
- Be responsible for providing customer service
- Be responsible for integration with all GRT services

The private partner will:
- Take Stage 1 LRT to final design
- Build Stage 1 LRT
- Operate and maintain the LRT system between Kitchener and Waterloo to meet the Region’s service and performance standards

Did you know that Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) are a proven and widely used procurement approach for large public infrastructure projects in Canada?
P3s work because they engage the expertise and innovation of the private sector. They also transfer a major share of the risks to the private sector so taxpayers are not responsible for cost overruns, delays or performance issues over the life of the agreement.
Building up, not out

Waterloo Region is experiencing unprecedented change. Residents and investors are attracted to the region’s quality of life, innovation and commitment to shaping the community for generations to come.

The rapid transit corridor is attracting talent, new business and growth and existing businesses are expanding and building.

Investment in the future can already be seen along the ION corridor, with new residential and commercial construction projects beginning all the time.

- More than 50 per cent of new residential development is already occurring in built-up areas along the rapid transit corridor – Regional Transportation Master Plan Progress Update, January 28 2014

- The local construction industry will surge by 10 per cent in 2014 and 2015 as work on LRT begins - Conference Board of Canada

- For the first time in more than a decade, construction of apartments and townhouses outnumbers new single family and semi-attached home construction, demonstrating the desire for compact, urban living in our community.

The total value of residential and non-residential building permits in 2013 along the ION corridor was $250 million.

What is the Community Building Strategy?

Endorsed by Regional Council in 2013, the Community Building Strategy provides a framework for development along the ION corridor and around ION stops.

- Created to help guide growth and development around ION stops
- A highly collaborative and unique approach to planning for Waterloo Region
- Focused on encouraging attractive, compact, pedestrian/transit-friendly developments

The Community Building Strategy is part of the Region’s ‘Big Shift Toolbox’ and is available at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/bigshift.
Building ridership

The Region is already seeing positive results in terms of transit ridership.

- Since the Region began providing transit in the community in 2000, ridership has more than doubled – from nine million per year in 2000 to nearly 23 million in 2012.
- The projected year one daily ridership of ION LRT is 25,000. Today, Route 7 and iXpress already carry about 20,000 rides per day. ION will replace these routes.
- GRT has already achieved its ridership target for 2016 – four years ahead of schedule – with ridership now at 22 million per year.

GRT Ridership

Ridership has doubled in the past decade with 2016 targets already being achieved.

iXpress Ridership Growth

Ridership has seen a steady increase over the past eight years.
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