



Connecting to the Future

Rapid Transit Newsletter



DECEMBER 2006

Region evaluates rapid transit technologies

The Region of Waterloo is taking the next step in developing a rapid transit system that will link Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo and help shape the future of our community.

In addition to creating an integrated, sustainable and convenient transportation system, the Region will choose a rapid transit technology that will also help to manage future growth and development. Rapid transit can help focus residential and commercial development around rapid transit stations. This will reduce pressure on the urban/rural boundary and help protect our valuable agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

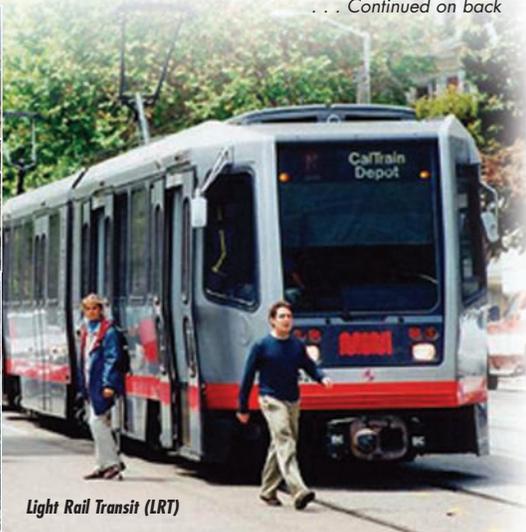
Rapid transit will operate primarily in a dedicated transit lane that is not impacted by traffic. Possible rapid transit route designs and technologies are now being examined, and public input is playing an important role in this process. Decisions made today about the kind of rapid transit system we will build in Waterloo Region will help us manage three of the most important concerns identified by residents – traffic, growth and the environment.

“Waterloo Region is a world-class community which will see continuing significant growth,” said Regional Chair Ken Seiling. “With a population in excess of 500,000, and expected growth to 729,000 within the next 25 years, the Region is planning now for the challenges and opportunities associated with rapid population and employment growth.”

What is the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment (EA)?

The EA is a three-phase study process that will help Regional Council and the

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Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Get Involved in the Rapid Transit Initiative!

You are invited to a Public Consultation Centre (PCC) to review the short list of technologies and to help shape the future of transportation in Waterloo Region.

The Region will be holding the PCC in three locations for your convenience. It will be an informal drop-in format featuring displays, videos and information handouts, so please feel free to come and go at any time during the scheduled time. Regional staff and consultants will also be there to discuss the evaluation results with you and answer any questions you may have.

CAMBRIDGE

Jan. 9, 2007 – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Cambridge Centre for the Arts, 45 Thorne St.

On-street two-hour parking is available in the area around the Centre for the Arts. Lots are located on Main Street and Lutz Street.

WATERLOO

Jan. 10, 2007 – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Regional Public Health and Social Services Building, 99 Regina St.

Two hour free parking is available at Waterloo Town Square.

KITCHENER

Jan. 11, 2007 – 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Regional Administrative Headquarters, 150 Frederick St.

Parking is available under the building accessed from Frederick Street or behind the building accessed from Queen Street. Both lots are free after 6 p.m.

For Grand River Transit information please visit www.grt.ca or call 519-585-7555.

For further information on the PCC, please call the Rapid Transit Infoline at 519-575-4757 ext. 3242 or e-mail: rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca

Accessibility:

This event is accessible for people with disabilities and is served by Grand River Transit. Accessible parking is available. If you require assistance to attend or participate in this meeting, or to access information in alternate formats, please contact us at least five days prior to the meeting at: Email: rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca

Phone: 519-575-4757 ext. 3242

TTY: 519-575-4609 Fax: 519-575-4449

community select the rapid transit technology, routes and station locations.

The EA is part of a larger Rapid Transit Initiative that will also include

improvements to the Region's conventional transit system, Grand River Transit.



GRANDBYDESIGN
Shaping Our Community

"Our existing transportation systems can't keep pace with the rapid growth we are experiencing, and building and widening roads alone is not a practical or affordable solution," said Yanick Cyr, Project Director of the Rapid Transit Initiative. "The Rapid Transit Initiative will help attract more riders which will help us address increasing traffic congestion throughout the entire community, and the impact it is having on our air quality."

Where are we at in the EA process?

Regional Council approved rapid transit as the preferred transportation solution for Waterloo Region in July 2006. The next step is to narrow down the choices from 10 rapid transit technologies and four route designs – everything from the tried and true to the exciting and new, as well as emerging technologies of the future – so that the best options for Waterloo Region can be studied in more detail.

On Sept. 21, 2006, the Region hosted a Public Information Session and Workshop. More than 140 community members from across the Region came together to provide ideas on where rapid transit routes and stations could be located.

Participants at the workshop and other members of the community who provided input, also talked about the features of a rapid transit that were most important to them. Accessibility, frequency and speed, safety, flexibility,

environmentally friendly and a "good fit" with the existing community were some of the many ideas put forward.

How will we decide which technology is best for Waterloo Region?

Each type of rapid transit technology and route design has features that make it suitable for different communities and transportation needs.

To help determine which technologies and route design may be most suitable for Waterloo Region, three evaluation criteria were developed and approved by the Ontario Ministry of Environment.

They are summarized below:

- Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) Reurbanization Objectives: Does the rapid transit route design and technology support provincial and municipal goals for managing future growth and development, such as promoting development in urban areas?;
- Service Quality: Has the technology been used in communities similar to Waterloo Region?; and
- Capacity: Is the technology appropriate for the expected transit demand?

To help answer these questions, the Region's Rapid Transit Project Team is incorporating the public's feedback on the most important features of a rapid transit system to assess each technology.

What's next?

The Project Team is now completing the evaluation process and will recommend a preferred short list of rapid transit technologies. The preferred short list will be presented to the public at a series of Public Consultation Centres (PCC).

Your input will help the Region develop a short list of technologies that will undergo in-depth study and evaluation during the rest of Phase 2.

The results will shape the final design of Waterloo Region's future rapid transit system.

Following the PCC, a recommended short list incorporating the public's input will be presented to Regional Council. Following this, a more detailed evaluation of technologies, as well as routes and station locations, will begin.

Where can I get more information?

More information on the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment can be found on Region's website at www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea. For more information about the Phase 2 technologies and route designs, evaluation criteria and measures and a summary of the public input, look under the Environmental Assessment/Phases/Phase 2 tabs.

SIGN UP!



To learn more about the Rapid Transit Initiative and help shape the future of transportation in Waterloo Region, please join the Rapid Transit Contact List.

You will receive future copies of this newsletter as well as notice of upcoming public meetings, conferences and events, and future Regional Council decisions.

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea
and click on the Sign Up tab.

If you do not have access to the Internet, please call the Rapid Transit Infoline at: 519-575-4757 ext. 3242.

