

## WHERE ARE WE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS?



In July 2006, Regional Council approved Phase 1 of the Environmental Assessment and selected the Rapid Transit Initiative as the preferred transportation strategy for Waterloo Region. The Region is now moving forward with Phase 2 to select the rapid transit technology, route and station locations.



Ten potential rapid transit technologies were evaluated based on criteria developed with input from the public at the first Public Workshop on Sept. 21, 2006. After an extensive public consultation process, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) operating on a Mix of On/Off Road route designs were short-listed for further evaluation.

The Region's consultants are now preparing to evaluate potential BRT and LRT routes and station locations within the Rapid Transit Study Area. Preliminary routes and station locations have been identified using the primary criteria noted earlier in this handout. The Region's Rapid Transit Project Team is now asking for your input on these preliminary routes and station locations, which will be incorporated in the detailed evaluation in Phase 2, Step 2.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Pick up a copy of the Region of Waterloo Rapid Transit Initiative Backgrounder that is available here tonight. This document contains details of the history of the Rapid Transit Initiative as well as up to date information on the progress made to date during the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment.

You can also find more information about the Region of Waterloo's Rapid Transit Initiative or the Environmental Assessment process on the Region's website at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea) or by contacting the Rapid Transit Infoline at [rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca) or 519-575-4757, ext. 3242.

## Add Your Voice to the Discussion!

You can give us your feedback on preliminary routes and station locations in four easy ways:

- 1 Fill in the Public Comment Sheet tonight and leave it with Regional staff;
- 2 Take the Public Comment Sheet home with you (take one for a friend too!) fill it in, and return it to the Region by April 5, 2007.
- 3 Contact the Rapid Transit Infoline at [rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca) or 519-575-4757, ext. 3242, and give us your input in a message;
- 4 Go to [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea) and click on the Sign Up tab.



# Rapid Transit

Environmental Assessment



## PUBLIC WORKSHOP – Information Handout

PHASE 2, STEP 2 – Preliminary Routes and Station Locations

March 20, 21, 22, 2007

6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Information Displays: 6-6:30 p.m. Presentation: 6:30-7 p.m. Round Table Discussions: 7-8:30 p.m.

**WELCOME to the Rapid Transit Public Workshop, the second in a series of workshops designed to gather public input during the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment.**

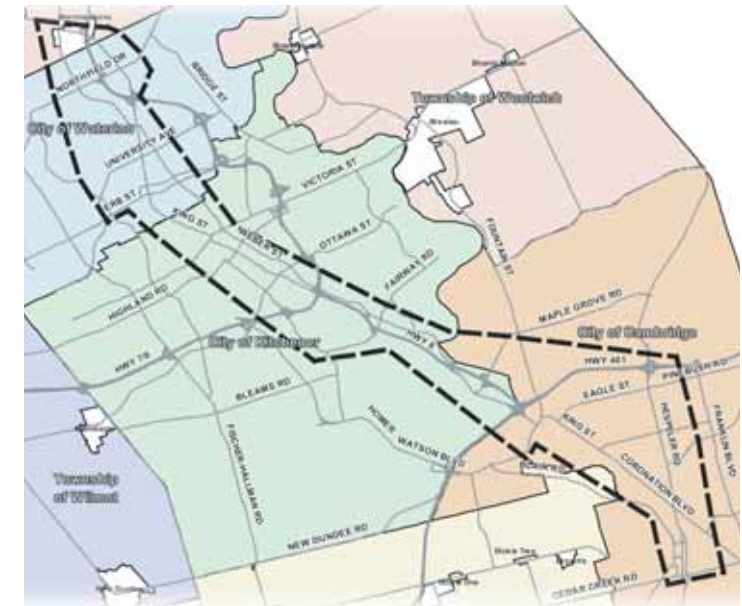
Public input is an essential and ongoing component of the Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment and has been used throughout the process to help Regional Council make key decisions that will help shape the future of our community.

The purpose of this workshop is to get your input on the preliminary routes and station locations that have been identified by the Region's consultants. Your input will be used to help refine the list of possible routes and station locations in the Study Area. These will be evaluated in greater detail during the next phase of the Environmental Assessment (EA) using the evaluation criteria from the Provincially-approved Terms of Reference.

This handout includes information about how preliminary routes and station locations were chosen, as well as general information about the Rapid Transit Initiative and the decisions that have been made to date. It also provides additional information about how you can find out more about the Rapid Transit Initiative and the ongoing Environmental Assessment.

### How were these Preliminary Routes and Station Locations chosen?

At the Sept. 21, 2006 Public Workshop, we asked the community what possible destinations rapid transit should serve and where stations should be located in order to get people where they want to go. The Region's consultants reviewed your input in consultation with the Local Municipalities. They then assessed suggested routes and station locations in each of the seven segments of the Study Area using the following key factors:



- ▶ **Corridor Width** – Is the road or rail right-of-way wide enough to allow for the addition of a dedicated rapid transit right-of-way?
- ▶ **Reurbanization Potential** – Has the area around the station been identified as one that can support and benefit from the additional reurbanization and intensification that will be attracted to a rapid transit station?

# Rapid Transit

Environmental Assessment



► **Route Alignment** – Does the proposed route offer a relatively direct connection to the proposed stations in order to improve travel times?

► **Service Potential** – Is the station location able to serve multiple destinations and is it accessible to potential riders?

The Preliminary Routes and Station Locations that have been chosen are indicated on the maps on display at this workshop. More detailed maps can also be viewed by visiting our website at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea) and clicking on the Rapid Transit Initiative and Maps tabs.



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Region's consultants will use your input at this Public Workshop to refine the list of possible routes and station locations in the Study Area. These will be evaluated in greater detail during the next phase of the Environmental Assessment. The evaluation process and detailed list of 21 evaluation criteria are contained in the EA Terms of Reference and include measures such as:

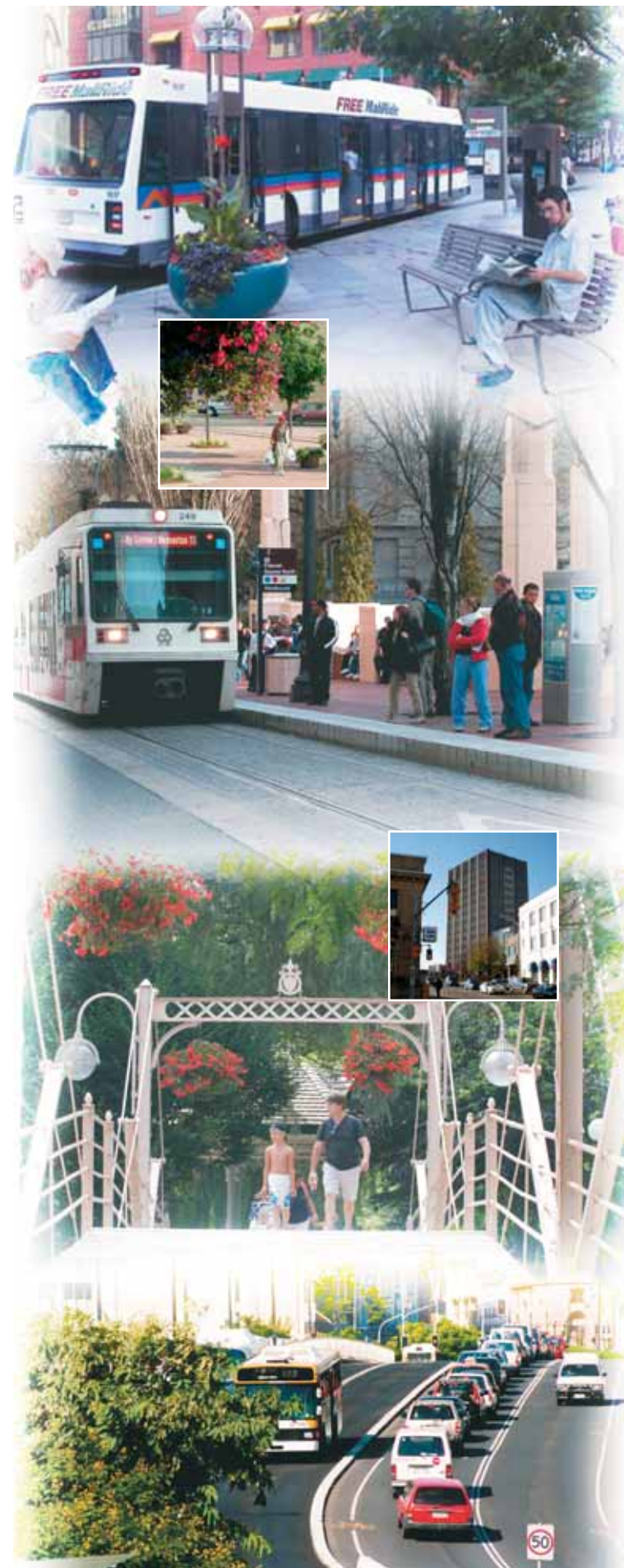
- Ridership potential;
- System performance;
- Benefits to traffic patterns;
- Ability to serve residential, employment, business and institutional transportation needs;
- Contribution to public health;
- Potential environmental and ecological impacts; and
- Estimated capital and operating cost.

Once this evaluation is complete, the Region's Rapid Transit Project Team will present a series of ranked route and station location alternatives to the public later this spring for additional input at a Public Consultation Centre.

## HAVE YOU JOINED THE RAPID TRANSIT CONTACT LIST?

By adding your name to the Rapid Transit Contact List, you will receive notices of upcoming meetings, events and other public consultation opportunities. You'll also receive updates on the Environmental Assessment process and information about key decisions that are made.

Go to [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/transitea) and click on the Sign Up tab, or contact the Rapid Transit Infoline at [rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:rtinfo@region.waterloo.on.ca) or 519-575-4757, ext. 3242.



## BACKGROUND

### What is Rapid Transit?

Rapid transit is defined as a public transportation system operating for its entire length primarily on a dedicated right-of-way or transit lane. By operating separately from traffic, rapid transit is a more efficient and effective way to travel in the Region. Experiences in other communities have proven that rapid transit encourages commuters to choose transit over private vehicles. The Region of Waterloo is currently carrying out an Environmental Assessment for the development of a rapid transit system from north Waterloo to south Cambridge.

Rapid transit is an integral part of the Region's Growth Management Strategy, and is expected to be reflected in the Regional Transportation Master Plan (RTMP). The RTMP is currently being updated to create a long-term sustainable community transportation vision for Waterloo Region that will include future planning for rapid and conventional transit, roads, pedestrians and cyclists.

### Why does Waterloo Region need Rapid Transit?

With a population now exceeding 500,000, and a projected population growth to nearly 730,000 by 2031, Waterloo Region is looking for environmentally sustainable solutions to help manage future growth. Both the Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) and the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe identify rapid transit as a key part of the solution.

### Rapid transit has many proven benefits:

- **Rapid transit is good for the economy:** Rapid transit is a cost-effective travel alternative for individuals in comparison to the increasing cost to own, operate and maintain a car. Studies have also shown that communities that invest in rapid transit achieve a significant return on their investment through new jobs and increased economic activity;
- **Rapid transit is good for business:** Rapid transit connects employers with employees by giving businesses access to a broader pool of workers. It also gives workers improved travel times and access to even greater job opportunities and students greater access to schools and services;
- **Rapid transit is an efficient, environmentally friendly transportation solution:** Experiences in other communities have proven that investments in rapid transit encourage commuters to choose public transit, walking and cycling. This is not only good for public health, it also helps reduce traffic and cut auto emissions;
- **Rapid transit is an effective land-use planning tool:** Other communities that have implemented rapid transit have found that it attracts higher density residential and commercial development around rapid transit stations. This will help Waterloo Region to better manage future growth and protect our water supply and prime agricultural lands from development;
- **Rapid transit creates more compact and sustainable urban areas:** By attracting growth and development, rapid transit promotes intensification and reurbanization in our urban areas. More compact urban areas will help us maximize our investment in expensive infrastructure like water, wastewater services, roads and transit.

