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PHASE 1

Rapid Transit Environmental Assessment (EA)
Phase One - Public Meeting, April 5 & 6, 2006
Feedback from Group Discussions

Points Noted from April 5, 2006 Discussion Groups at Regional Building

Discussion Question (same for all five groups)

Looking ahead 25 years and considering that the population of the Region could grow to 730,000 along with significant employment growth. What, in your view, are the advantages and disadvantages of the various transportation alternatives (Rapid Transit and the three Alternatives) in helping us meet our future growth and transportation needs?

Blue Group	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ Less costs in the short-term	▪ Infrastructure has to catch up to the growth
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ Certain economic stakeholders lobby, etc	▪ Could generate more auto traffic ▪ More development on edge ▪ Longer travel times ▪ Negative impact on environment (land consumption, air quality) ▪ Externalities of auto accidents
Improved conventional Transit	▪ Increased ridership ▪ More flexible to adjust to development and ridership demand ▪ Initially less capital costs	▪ Still needs roads ▪ Mixed traffic – reliability with travel time delay. Peak period congestion impacts buses ▪ Greater reliance on bus lanes – some roads difficult to implement ▪ High frequency of buses in congestion not a pleasant environment for pedestrians/cyclists ▪ Less able to influence urban form
Rapid Transit	▪ Move more people faster ▪ Dependable and reliable ▪ Need supportive land use to make Rapid Transit successful ▪ Need to ensure that planning for Rapid Transit will include better integration with inter-regional public transit services ▪ Must put in place a supporting and integrated bus network ▪ Could reduce parking requirements, therefore more development with intensification	▪ Cautious of impact on cross-traffic

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Yellow Group	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ Cheapest / least cost ▪ Few planning costs ▪ What citizens expect "status quo" ▪ Non-decision ▪ Buy-in from car users ▪ Path of least resistance ▪ Congestion of roads will force people to use transit	▪ Air pollution /emissions ▪ No incentive for efficient transit ▪ Unsustainable conventional transit ▪ Unreliable conventional transit ▪ Unchecked urban sprawl ▪ Loss of rural landscape ▪ Does not support health of urban centres ▪ After sprawl happens we can't change our minds
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ Temporarily relieves congestion ▪ Most appealing to suburban public ▪ Addresses personal flexibility of car travel ▪ Maintains lower density	▪ Difficulties during construction ▪ Right of way is limited on existing roads ▪ Increased land consumption ▪ "Bad for transit" ▪ Capital costs for maintenance ▪ Air pollution ▪ Urban centres lose charm ▪ Costs shared by everyone – impacts to environment, health, economy ▪ Impact beyond our region
Improved Conventional Transit	▪ More access to those without a car ▪ More flexible for changing routes ▪ More express buses ▪ Encourage exploration of alternative fuels	▪ Short-term solution for vehicles on the road ▪ Old buses in service to save money ▪ Still stuck in traffic and increasing traffic congestion ▪ More buses with fewer people on each – expensive and not efficient ▪ Air pollution
Rapid Transit	▪ New stations will improve accessibility for the disabled ▪ Supports countryside line ▪ Speed of travel ▪ Opportunity to intensify land use ▪ More cohesive region ▪ Demonstrates leadership Canada /World ▪ More advertising opportunity ▪ Air quality and environmental benefits ▪ More people friendly in the downtown ▪ Strategic vision – taking control of our future. ▪ Ease of future expansion	▪ Capital cost are high ▪ Harm of not intensifying well – poor design ▪ Speculation of land near stations ▪ Uncertainty if people will use it ▪ External factors outside of our control ▪ Challenge of integration with other modes i.e. local buses, bikes

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Green Group	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ None ▪ Least planning ▪ May appear to save money initially ▪ Easy to accomplish	▪ Not enough urban growth ▪ No infilling ▪ No reurbanization in the cores ▪ Loss of green space ▪ Most air pollution ▪ No improvement in ridership
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ None ▪ Moves people around a lot quicker where people want to go ▪ Initial costs ▪ Easy to accomplish ▪ expansiveness	▪ Poor land use and environmentally unfriendly ▪ Consumes green space ▪ More cars, more pollution, accidents, cost ▪ Difficult to accommodate transit ▪ Increases number of vehicles
Improved Conventional Transit	▪ Overall improvement to transit system ▪ Most flexibility ▪ Increased ridership, may save money ▪ Improve bus frequency and dependability ▪ Improve ridership	▪ Doesn't increase transportation choice ▪ Doesn't attract commercial interest ▪ May be less cost effective ▪ More wear and tear on roads and more pollution ▪ Committed to one option only ▪ Won't encourage ridership ▪ Not exciting
Rapid Transit	▪ Reduces congestion ▪ Good for environment ▪ Improves livability ▪ Permanent corridor for long-term planning and infilling ▪ High capability and accessibility ▪ Long-range planning possible ▪ Could have monorail above ground ▪ Is exciting	▪ Upfront costs ▪ Need to convince people ▪ Limited initial ridership ▪ Climate concerns ▪ Choosing permanent line, interaction with traffic

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Orange Group	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ No significant infrastructure costs of infrastructure ▪ Unlikely to disrupt current community norms ▪ Well understood ▪ Achieves a number of growth goals ▪ Removes cars from congested roads	▪ Encourages continued urban sprawl ▪ Continued car reliance ▪ Where is it going ▪ Bad for the environment ▪ Poor air quality ▪ More land consumption
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ Less congestion in the short-term ▪ Most flexible for short-term auto user ▪ Relatively cheaper in short term ▪ Development as needed ▪ Allow development to go where it's most economical ▪ Politically popular / easy ▪ Some thought that the disadvantages are relatively minor saying that you could cure air pollution by focusing on all people not just transit	▪ Continuation of urban sprawl / doesn't prevents sprawl ▪ Doesn't accommodate growth ▪ Transportation problems will increase (more cars on the road) ▪ There needs to be a paradigm shift all over, not just transit ▪ Discourages growth of use of system ▪ San Diego plan ▪ Increase in single vehicles ▪ Time-dated clean cars, smart cars, disadvantage ▪ Induced demand
Improved Conventional Transit	▪ Slow down urban sprawl (possibly) ▪ Increase in service and ridership ▪ Lower investment cost ▪ Flexibility ▪ Bus rapid transit should be included – already have IXpress – could put it on its own right of way ▪ Distinction between different urban forms – big change in behaviour ▪ Easily understood	▪ Doesn't offer competitive travel ▪ Needs right of way ▪ Has to be faster ▪ Core audience for economic sector ▪ More congestion ▪ Still have urban sprawl ▪ Find out from each city what they want ▪ Parking at end ▪ Need simultaneous process that deals with issue of societal transition
Rapid Transit	▪ Limits urban sprawl ▪ Creative transit option ▪ Good for environment ▪ Allows for faster travel than any ▪ Influences business location ▪ Best chance to encourage reurbanization ▪ "Sexy" ▪ Cost effective / Full cost accountability ▪ Reduces number of cars on the street ▪ Les pollution over all – ideal ▪ Depends where power coming from	▪ Capital costs are highest ▪ Will it attract ridership, will it work? ▪ What would get municipality, elected officials to make decisions and implement ▪ Not flexible ▪ High risk ▪ Will never serve Cambridge ▪ Doesn't significantly change driving habits ▪ High traffic congestion in CTC ▪ Fixed route not efficient

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Star Group	Discussion Points
General Comments	▪ Have to fix the bus system to make it a real alternative ▪ LRT requires a new culture ▪ Need to serve residents ▪ Implementation takes a long time, have to start planning now ▪ The current bus system is inflexible and takes too long ▪ Have to look at all technologies – taxis at the end of town, buses every five minutes ▪ Need more density to support frequent service – need to see cultural change ▪ The Regional Growth Management Strategy is a first step ▪ Rapid Transit is not just a technology but a whole set of policies ▪ Currently subsidizing roads use – have to reverse this ▪ Transportation will affect development trends ▪ Greenbelt will stimulate a slot of development in Waterloo ▪ Sprawl will have major impacts (air, water, more transportation is needed, inefficient public transportation) ▪ Could have intensification with other modes but much harder to do with les permanent modes ▪ Should not try to force people to live where they don't want to ▪ Need incentives to shape development ▪ Planning needs to have teeth
Comments on Alternatives	**Baseline** ▪ Already see problems of congestion and this will only continue **Improved bus system** ▪ Needs to be done as well as a rapid transit spine ▪ Lots of origin / destination ▪ Also need feeders **Rapid Transit** ▪ Need to have a permanent rapid transit system ▪ Lots of European cities started working when they were the size of Waterloo ▪ Development will follow rapid transit ▪ Have to integrate the whole city the rapid transit system
Other Comments	Should establish chat room on the internet

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Group 1	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ Low cost / no effect on taxes ▪ Permits freedom of choice ▪ Known results ▪ Low impact ▪ No advantages ▪ Supply and demand (cost) ▪ Growth can be incremental ▪ No major disruption of neighbourhood structures	▪ Air pollution ▪ Traffic congestion ▪ Sprawl ▪ Already failing ▪ Won't keep up with growth of region ▪ Vulnerable to increase in oil prices ▪ Increases health problem (costs as well) ▪ Some questions why the Region needs to intensify – why do we need growth?
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ Less congestion ▪ Permits freedom of living and working ▪ Addresses immediate problem ▪ Improved travel time ▪ Increases accessibility ▪ Less cost than rapid transit ▪ Less impact on taxes ▪ Relatively slow expansion - incremental	▪ Air pollution ▪ Larger parking lots ▪ Does not solve problem – pushes it further off with no alternatives to the auto ▪ Slow traffic during construction ▪ Never done – continually expanding ▪ Must restrict it over time to protect farmland ▪ High operating costs ▪ Still leaving cars as primary mode ▪ Isolating for low income – housing types ▪ May not keep up – less space
Improved Conventional Transit	▪ Shorter travel time ▪ Flexibility to many places ▪ Flexible, gets people used to leaving cars at home if routes are improved ▪ Part of bigger transportation strategy ▪ Better service = more potential riders ▪ Build routes to build ridership ▪ Less cost compared to rapid transit ▪ Walk before we run ▪ More express buses needed ▪ Shuttle services, more flexibility ▪ Different structure ▪ Build ridership first	▪ High cost ▪ Congestion could still increase ▪ Emissions could increase ▪ Traffic and exhaust ▪ Smaller users (no statistics) ▪ Unknown acceptance ▪ Won't move people as efficiently (no dedicated lanes) ▪ Won't get people out of cars ▪ People don't want to use conventional buses ▪ Need to keep statistics on travel patterns
Rapid Transit	▪ Least travel time ▪ Higher speed ▪ Low operating costs ▪ Serve area that it goes through ▪ Sexy ▪ Better use of facilities and corridor ▪ Improves land use around the line ▪ Housing density most efficient ▪ Doesn't have to compete with traffic ▪ High potential for ridership	▪ May not serve other areas as well ▪ Highest cost including maintenance ▪ Lack of flexibility ▪ Dependent on concentration of jobs ▪ Difficult to attract riders offline ▪ Unknown acceptance / Lack of public perception of a problem ▪ Requires secondary links to bus based or cars ▪ Commuting path inconsistency with route ▪ Other areas have higher need ▪ Loss of small town atmosphere by growth)

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Group 2	Advantages	Disadvantages
Baseline	▪ Car travel is flexible ▪ Balance of transit and cars is important ▪ Lower costs ▪ Easiest – little planning required	▪ More congestion ▪ More parking spaces ▪ Pollution ▪ Would harm urban centres
Road Improvement and Expansion	▪ Reduce congestion ▪ Certain trips are not within the CTC and road expansion would accommodate these trips	▪ Roads costly (capital and maintenance) ▪ Air pollution ▪ Increased sprawl ▪ Unsustainable – not a long term solution
Improved Conventional Transit	▪ More flexibility ▪ HOV would encourage car pools ▪ Increased transit ridership would slow congestion ▪ Step toward Rapid Transit ▪ Could include smaller transit vehicles such as jitneys, could serve as connection to buses ▪ Some air quality improvement ▪ Better mobility for low-income	▪ Transit mixed with traffic ▪ More roads required to move the buses
Rapid Transit	▪ Reasonable long term overall costs ▪ Can connect with local buses ▪ Put Rapid Transit in now, so development forms around it ▪ More comfortable ride ▪ Feeder buses can directly connect to Rapid Transit ▪ Increased transit frequency ▪ Protect agricultural land	▪ Large up-front costs ▪ Only serves Central Transit Corridor ▪ Need road congestion to get people to use Rapid Transit ▪ Potential risk of achieving good ridership before density builds