



REGION OF WATERLOO

**PLANNING, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
Administration**

TO: Chair Jim Wideman and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

DATE: September 11, 2012

FILE CODE: A23-20

SUBJECT: KING/VICTORIA TRANSIT HUB FIRST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

SUMMARY:

On September 27, 2012, the Region and the City of Kitchener are co-hosting an open house from 4 to 8 p.m. at the University of Waterloo's School of Pharmacy. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to and get input from neighbouring property owners and residents and the broader community about the work that is being done now, and in the future, at the King/Victoria Transit Hub site.

The open house will feature information displays that will provide an overview on the 10 different initiatives related to the Hub site. City of Kitchener staff and Regional staff from each of the projects will also attend to answer questions. At 7 p.m., there will be a formal presentation that will focus primarily on two initiatives:

- The Region's formal applications to the City of Kitchener to make changes to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law for the King/Victoria Transit Hub site to allow for a broader range of uses, higher density and reduced parking at the site; and
- Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan for the Hub site that provides design and access concepts for consideration that will ensure the transportation infrastructure at the site will fit together to provide the best connections.

Amendments to both the City of Kitchener's Official Plan and Zoning By-law are required to allow for a broader range of uses on the Hub site such as residential and ground floor commercial uses, higher density development and changes to the parking requirements. To support these requested amendments the Region has also prepared an Urban Design Brief that provides direction on urban design, and a Heritage Impact Assessment.

As the owner of the site, the Region has considerable influence in the development of this gateway property with high quality design and architecture, and as a state-of-the-art transportation facility.

The Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan provides design and layout options for the Hub site's transportation infrastructure and interfaces with Rapid Transit, GO/VIA rail, Grand River Transit (GRT), local roads, buses, pedestrians and cycling routes. It includes features such as:

- A prominent pedestrian space along King Street that continues into a plaza and then into a Grand Hall in a building next to the railway;
- Generous sidewalk space;
- Dedicated cycling routes and cycling amenities such as racks and storage lockers;

- Ground floor retail, restaurants and services along the streets;
- Direct connections to Grand River Transit and the GO/VIA platform;
- Closing Waterloo Street to vehicles so there is more room for transportation functions and other development opportunities, but keeping it as a key access to the Hub for those arriving on foot or by bike; and
- New 'streetscaping' features such as trees, benches, lighting, shelters and planters. Streetscaping is primarily an Area Municipal responsibility within road allowances, and staff continue to discuss these options with City of Kitchener staff.

The Plan also includes design concepts for consideration that improve the initial designs for the King Street West grade separation project to help avoid the tunnel effect experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and people boarding and alighting transit that is typical of older rail underpasses.

Invitations to the open house have been mailed to property owners within 800 metres of the site, and Regional staff is working with City of Kitchener Ward Councillor Dan Glenn-Graham to ensure tenants in multi-storey buildings and commercial areas area also notified. In addition, the City will also be mailing notification of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to all property owners within 120 metres of the property (in accordance with City Council Policy and Ontario Regulation). These letters provide more information with respect to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application processes. The City of Kitchener and Regional notifications have been co-ordinated by City and Regional staff.

Communication staff at both the Region and the City of Kitchener will also notify the general public of the meeting through paid and unpaid media, social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, and through notifications that will be sent using the various database of residents, agencies and businesses that have signed up to receive notifications related to transportation initiatives. The invitation that has been mailed to neighbours is attached as Appendix A.

Presentation materials that will be on display at the Open House are attached as Appendix B.

REPORT:

As described in Report #P-12-076 to the August 14, 2012 Planning and Works Committee, staff are continuing work on a number of initiatives for the Hub site, as well as other related projects, that are needed to prepare the Hub site for future redevelopment. The goal is to ensure the King/Victoria Transit Hub is not only a focal point for transportation in Waterloo Region, but also an attractive urban space that is both an iconic destination and a catalyst for future development in the area.

On September 27, 2012, the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener are co-hosting an open house from 4 to 8 p.m. at the University of Waterloo's School of Pharmacy (across the street from the Hub site) to provide information to and get input from neighbouring property owners and residents and the broader community about the work that is being done now, and in the future, at the Hub site.

The meeting will feature information displays that will provide an overview on the 10 different initiatives related to the Hub site. City of Kitchener staff and Regional staff from each of the projects will also be there to answer questions. At 7 p.m., there will be a formal presentation that will focus primarily on two initiatives:

- The Region's formal applications to the City of Kitchener to make changes to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law for the King/Victoria Transit Hub site to allow for a broader range of uses, higher density and reduced parking at the site; and

- The Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan for the Hub site that provides design and access concepts for consideration that will ensure the transportation infrastructure at the site will fit together to provide the best connections, as well as safe and easy access to and from the site for pedestrians and cyclists, and those arriving by cars, buses and trains.

These initiatives are described in more detail below.

Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments

The site is now designated the Warehouse District in the City's Official Plan, which permits industrial, office and commercial uses in mid-rise buildings. Residential within newly constructed buildings, institutional and general retail uses, however, are not permitted. The Warehouse District zoning that applies to the site aligns with the Official Plan permissions, and therefore does not permit residential or the full range of retail uses. The Warehouse District zoning sets a maximum amount of developable area of two times the lot area. As such, amendments to both the City of Kitchener's Official Plan and Zoning By-law are required to allow for the creation of a high density mixed-use development on the Hub site.

The Region has submitted an Official Plan Amendment proposing that a Special Policy Area designation be applied to the Hub site. This Special Policy Area would allow for a broader range of land uses, such as residential and ground floor commercial uses, a higher scale of development, and changes to the parking requirements. The application also contains recommendations on urban design and a Heritage Impact Assessment, which has identified the original Rumpel Felt building (circa 1913) as significant from a heritage perspective and worthy of consideration for conservation.

The Hub site is currently zoned Warehouse District (D-6), which does not permit residential use of the site, or general retail on the ground floor of new buildings, and has a maximum scale of development of two times the lot area (with some increase possible if designated heritage resources are retained). The Region's Zoning By-law Amendment application requests that the zoning be amended to allow residential, retail and research uses, adjust building setbacks and reduce parking requirements based on the availability of many transportation modes and the central location of the site. The Region is proposing that a special provision be applied in the Zoning By-law to prohibit residential use of the Site until a Record of Site Condition (RSC) is available to confirm that the site has acceptable soil conditions for this more sensitive use.

Several reports have also been completed to support the Region's requested amendments, and were submitted to the City of Kitchener as part of the application process:

- A preliminary noise and vibration study was conducted that concludes it is feasible to develop residential units in the vicinity of King and Victoria Streets, as long as standard industry practices are used that are designed to reduce noise and vibration impacts;
- A Heritage Impact Assessment study was completed to define the built heritage of the site. This study recommends that the original portion of the Rumpel Felt building at the west end of the structure, built in 1913, be conserved. It does not recommend that subsequent additions to the building be retained. It should be noted that the future of this building is expected to be considered as the site's ultimate design is finalized over the next few years. In the interim, Regional staff continue to keep the Rumpel Felt building secure through active property management; and
- An Urban Design Brief was prepared, in consultation with the City of Kitchener, to provide guidance on the overall design philosophy and principles that the Region expects to be used during the development of the Hub site. Urban design is a critical element, and the Urban Design Brief reflects the Region's and the City of Kitchener's shared vision of the

Hub as a landmark gateway project.

Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan

The Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan provides conceptual design and layout options for the Hub site's transportation infrastructure and interfaces with Rapid Transit, GO/VIA rail, Grand River Transit (GRT), local roads, inter-city buses, pedestrians and cycling routes.

The study was guided by a Working Group consisting of engineering and planning staff from both the City of Kitchener and Region of Waterloo. In addition, numerous meetings were held with other stakeholders representing the interests of active transportation, accessibility, rail operations and the surrounding property owners.

Everyone who will be using the Hub, whether they arrive by foot, bike, transit or car, will ultimately be a pedestrian. There will be a large volume of people travelling to/from the Hub and adjacent neighbourhoods and nearby destinations, as well as transferring between the various transportation modes at the Hub. Designing for these high levels of pedestrian activity was a key guiding principle in the development of the Site Design and Access Plan.

There are many functional elements that need to be accommodated at the Hub. These include the primary transportation-related elements:

- Light rail transit, running along King Street West and Victoria Street North and South;
- A relocated platform for GO trains and VIA trains;
- Layover space for intercity buses (including GO buses) and some GRT buses;
- Dedicated space for boarding and alighting GRT passengers;
- Passenger pick-up and drop-off (kiss and ride); and
- Vehicle parking to support development and an appropriate level of park and ride.

Overlaid on this is the need to optimize development potential on the site and surrounding areas in order to generate the level of activity that will ensure a vibrant pedestrian-oriented environment.

One of the key features included in the site design for consideration is the creation of a prominent pedestrian space along King Street West, which extends into a transit plaza and ultimately into the hub as a potential "Grand Hall". Similar to the Uptown Station in Waterloo, it is envisioned that the transit plaza will become a gathering space for a wide range of activities. The site design also incorporates a south entrance which could connect future developments on the School of Pharmacy site and lands to the west.

The Plan also includes conceptual design features for consideration to make the hub a walkable destination such as generous sidewalk space, ground floor retail, direct connections to Grand River Transit and the GO/VIA platform, and enhanced streetscaping. These features will be refined as the design of the hub continues, including ongoing discussions with the City of Kitchener as streetscaping is a municipal responsibility.

Ensuring access to and from the Hub site for cyclists was also a priority. Using the City of Kitchener Cycling plan and draft Region of Waterloo Active Transportation Plan as a starting point, the Plan provides preliminary concepts to improve access for cyclists.

The possibility of a multi-use trail connecting the hub to the Iron Horse Trail and the Waterloo Spur (for which senior government funding is currently being sought by Regional Council) has also been identified in the Plan, pending further investigations to determine if it is feasible from a design perspective. In addition, the Plan includes for consideration amenities to support cyclists, such as

large amounts of short-term and long-term parking, opportunities for bike sharing and facilities such as showers and lockers.

A review of the plans for the King Street Grade Separation was also undertaken as part of the Preliminary Site Design and Station Area Access Plan. King Street West currently crosses the rail tracks at grade. However, with the implementation of LRT and ultimately more frequent rail service, a grade separation is required. This separation will be created by lowering King Street West to pass under the rail corridor.

As part of the review of the original grade separation designs, the study team looked at different possible alignments options for LRT while considering how to avoid the tunnel effect experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and people boarding and alighting transit that is typical of older rail underpasses.

As a result of this review, the Plan includes different design concepts that improve the original concept. In developing the revised cross-section for King Street West, some trade-offs needed to be made in assigning space to different modes, given the limited right-of-way. These concepts will be considered by Regional staff working on the Rapid Transit project.

Finally, the Plan also recommends that Waterloo Street be closed to through traffic so that it no longer bisects the Hub site. The Plan recommends closing Waterloo Street in order to maximize opportunities for transportation functions and development potential, while maintaining it as a primary access for pedestrians and cyclists. In order to close Waterloo Street, a Schedule A+ Environmental Assessment is required. This process consists of a notification to adjacent land owners along with notification in local newspapers, and is currently being organized by Region and City of Kitchener staff. Once the process is completed, the request for closure would be sent to the City of Kitchener for final approval.

Other Related Projects

Display boards will also provide information about the following initiatives, all of which have been presented in previous Planning and Works reports and will be brought back to Regional Council in the future:

- **Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for the construction of the King/Victoria Transit Hub:** The Ontario government requires the Region to do an EA to assess potential impacts of the construction and operation of a Transit Hub. An EA is a regulatory process required for all significant transportation infrastructure projects and includes opportunities for public input.
- **Market Scope and Feasibility Study:** The Region has hired experts to look at how much demand there is in the market for different uses we may consider at the Hub site, and recommend possible site development options.
- **Rapid Transit:** The Region is building a rapid transit system with adapted Bus Rapid Transit (aBRT) service from the Ainslie Street terminal to Fairview Park Mall beginning in 2014, and Light Rail Transit service from Fairview Park Mall to Conestoga Mall beginning in 2017. For more information visit the rapid transit website at regionofwaterloo.ca/rapidtransit.
- **Community Building Strategy:** The Region is developing a strategy that will help shape how our community, especially in station areas, is planned and built around rapid transit. For more information, visit the website at centraltransitcorridor.ca.
- **Waterloo Street:** To accommodate GO Train service, Waterloo Street may need to be closed between the rail corridor and Victoria Street. The Region is completing the necessary studies in support of this closure, and will provide more details about when and how the street will be closed when they are finalized.

- **Realignment of Grand River Transit (GRT):** New GRT routes are now being designed and current bus routes are being realigned to complement the Region's new rapid transit service.
- **King Street Reconstruction:** King Street West along side the Transit Hub must be reconstructed so it runs beneath the railway tracks. This is called a grade separation because it separates activity on the rail corridor from the roadway, which will help meet future demand on both.
- **Weber Street Widening and Reconstruction:** The widening of Weber Street between College and Guelph Streets, and reconstruction of the road so that it runs under the railway tracks, will have an impact on the movement of people and vehicles in the neighbourhood, especially during construction in 2013 and 2014.

Invitations to the open house have been mailed to property owners within 800 metres of the site, and Regional staff is working with City of Kitchener Ward Councillor Dan Glenn-Graham to ensure tenants in multi-storey buildings and commercial areas area also notified. In addition, the City will also be mailing notification of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to all property-owners within 120 metres of the property (in accordance with City Council Policy and Ontario Regulation). These letters provide more information with respect to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application processes. The City of Kitchener and Regional notifications have been coordinated by City and Regional staff.

Communication staff at both the Region and the City of Kitchener will also notify the general public of the meeting through paid and unpaid media, social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter, and through notifications that will be sent using the various database of residents, agencies and businesses that have signed up to receive notifications related to transportation initiatives.

Area Municipal Consultation/Coordination

This Open House is being held as a joint meeting by the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener. All the project work, including the scope across intersecting projects, is being undertaken in consultation with the City of Kitchener staff. In particular, (i) City of Kitchener Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendment applications and (ii) the joint promotion of the Hub site (to attract new economic development opportunities) are being jointly conducted. The City of Kitchener staff are also represented in steering committees and working groups of the component sub-projects.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Hub project will contribute, directly and indirectly, towards accomplishing the following Action Items of the *Region of Waterloo Strategic Focus 2011–2014*.

- 3.4.1 Implement the multimodal transportation hub at Victoria and King Streets.
- 3.2.1 Work with Local Municipalities and other stakeholders to expand an integrated and safe network of regional, local and off-road cycling and walking routes.
- 2.3.2 Continue to identify and support partnership opportunities that foster innovation and economic development (e.g. post secondary institutions, technology, manufacturing, food processing, etc.).
- 2.1.2 Work with area municipalities to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to promote intensification and reurbanization within existing urban areas.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

As reported in the June 2012 Periodic Financial Report, total spending to date on property relating to the Hub project is \$6.8 million, which includes land acquisition and related costs, including land transfer taxes, commissions and consulting engineering fees associated with site redevelopment (including remediation, surveys and demolition). As part of a future Hub redevelopment strategy (to be considered by Regional Council), a detailed financing plan will be recommended.

Planning and consulting costs along with site operating, maintenance and repair costs associated with the ongoing development of the Hub project amounts to approximately \$700,000 to July 2012 and will be funded from the RT/RTMP property tax commitment of 1.5% (1% net) per year to 2018. Ongoing site operating costs are being partially offset with revenues from building leases and parking space rentals.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Staff support has been drawn for various roles, including specialists and managers of component sub-projects, from Planning, Housing and Community Services and Facilities Management and Legal of Corporate Resources. Procurement activities are being processed with assistance from Finance. Staff from Rapid Transit are being consulted and closely coordinated within all intersecting scope and stages.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Public Handout and Comment Form

PREPARED BY: *Keren Adderley*, Coordinator of Communications and Marketing

APPROVED BY: *Rob Horne*, Commissioner of Planning, Housing and Community Services

ATTACHMENT 1 – PUBLIC HANDOUT AND COMMENT FORM**Project Update****September 2012****Welcome to the Open House for the King/Victoria Transit Hub!**

Today's event is being hosted by the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener to provide you with an update on the work that is being done now, and in the future, at the Hub site. We would also like your input on two key initiatives:

- The Region's formal applications to the City of Kitchener to make changes to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law for the King/Victoria Transit Hub site; and
- The Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan for the Hub

We've also provided information displays on the many other projects underway that are related to the Hub site. Regional and City staff are here and available to answer any questions you may have.

Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments

Amendments to both the City of Kitchener's Official Plan and Zoning By-law are required to allow for a broader range of uses, a higher scale of development, and reduced parking requirements on the Hub site.

The Region has submitted an Official Plan Amendment asking that a Special Policy Area designation be applied to the Hub site. This Special Policy Area would allow for additional land uses, such as residential and ground floor commercial uses, an increase in the scale of development and a reduction in parking requirements. It would also provide direction on urban design and recommends saving and reusing the original Rumpel Felt building from 1913.

The Region's Zoning By-law Amendment application asks that the zoning be changed with the principal changes being to allow residential, retail and research uses, adjust the regulations for how far buildings must be set back from the street, and reduce the number of parking spaces that would need to be on the site because the site will be so well served by transit.

Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan

This study provides guidelines for how the site should be designed so that Rapid Transit, GO/VIA rail, Grand River Transit (GRT), local roads, buses, pedestrians and cycling routes all connect and work well at the Hub. This plan will help make sure the Hub is not only a focal point for transportation in Waterloo Region, but also an attractive urban space that will be a gateway to downtown Kitchener.

The Preliminary Site Design includes proposed features that will be further considered and refined as plans for the site develop, such as:

- A prominent pedestrian space along King Street that continues into a plaza and then into a Grand Hall in a building next to the railway;
- Generous sidewalk space;
- Dedicated cycling routes and cycling amenities such as racks and storage lockers;
- Ground floor retail, restaurants and services along the streets;
- Direct connections to Grand River Transit and the GO/VIA platform;
- Closing Waterloo Street to vehicles so there is more room for transportation functions and other development opportunities, but keeping it as a key access to the Hub for those arriving on foot or by bike; and
- New 'streetscaping' features such as trees, benches, lighting, shelters and planters (Streetscaping is primarily an Area Municipal responsibility within road allowances, so many of these features will need to be considered in consultation with the City of Kitchener).

The Plan also includes new design concepts for the King Street West grade separation project where King Street is being reconstructed to run underneath a new bridge for the railway tracks. These improvements were designed to help avoid the tunnel effect for pedestrians, cyclists and people using rapid transit that is typical of older rail underpasses.

The City of Kitchener is currently reviewing the Region's applications to amend the City's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw and would like your input about the proposed changes before City Council makes any decisions. Additional information on the application is available online at kitchener.ca or at the Planning Division, 6th Floor, City Hall, 200 King St. W. in Kitchener.

Please use the attached comment form to give your feedback to the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener. The comment sheet is also available online at regionofwaterloo.ca/transithub.



Public Open House – Sept. 27, 2012 COMMENT FORM

Please complete and hand in this sheet so that your views on the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments and the Preliminary Site Design Considerations and Proposed Station Area Access Plan can be considered. If you cannot complete your comments today, please take this home and mail, fax or email your comments to us by **October 19, 2012**. You can also complete this comment form online at regionofwaterloo.ca/transithub.

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What do you like about the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments?

What improvements do you suggest for the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments?

In addition to the transportation uses, what other uses or activities would you like to see at the

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form. To ensure that we receive only one set of comments from each individual, staff can only consider comments if they include a name and address. All comments regarding this project are being collected under the authority of the Municipal Act to assist the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener in making a decision. Under the Municipal Act, personal information such as name, address, telephone number, and property location that may be included in a submission become part of the public record. Questions regarding the collection of this information should be referred to the Region's Project Manager.

Depending on comments received and issues raised, the City of Kitchener may hold another public meeting in the future to discuss the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments in greater detail with staff, the applicant and residents. If you submit written comments, you will receive notification of the time and date if a meeting is scheduled.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please provide an email address if you would like to be added to the Region's electronic database for this project and receive email notices regarding project updates or future meetings.