What Is Walk Cycle Waterloo Region?

Walk Cycle Waterloo Region is a plan that will help make active modes of transportation in our communities safer, more comfortable and more convenient to use for those who don’t need to, want to, or aren’t able to use a car. In creating a better network for walking, cycling and rolling on sidewalks, roads and pathways, we can help ensure these active modes are a viable option for daily travel.

The Region’s aim is to meet the targets outlined in the Regional Transportation Master Plan, including 12 per cent of peak travel being done through cycling and walking by 2031. To reach this goal a 50 per cent increase is needed in active travel modes (from 2006 levels).

Research shows many people are interested in taking an active method of travel, if the route is comfortable and convenient. Walk Cycle Waterloo Region is an Active Transportation Master Plan and will provide the guidelines for improving route infrastructure and creating a better experience for those walking, cycling or rolling (mobility devices, in-line skating and skateboarding), and ensuring more accessible paths, roads and trails. It is a multi-year plan that can be implemented, pending Regional Council’s consideration of funding requirements, to help create more visible and well integrated bicycle and pedestrian networks and facilities, and help us reach the targets set out in the Regional Transportation Master Plan.

Where Are We Now?

We are in our final stages of developing the overall plan of action. The Plan includes the proposed walking and cycling networks, which have been updated with your input from our last public consultation. It also includes: a sign strategy to help everyone
find and use the networks; as well as four other Action Plans; plus new policy directions; and a design guide that will help the Region implement the recommendations included in Walk Cycle Waterloo Region.

This booklet provides a summary of the Walk Cycle Waterloo Region plan. Your input will help us finalize the plan and move towards implementation.

What Will Walk Cycle Waterloo Region Look Like?

Walk Cycle Waterloo Region will help us develop a 580-kilometre walking network and an 885-kilometre cycling network to serve the needs of our community. The Region has drafted plans that take into consideration:

- Comments received from the public
- Input from Regional and Area Municipal staff
- Input received from the Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- Implementation of Rapid Transit and Grand River Transit’s service changes and improvements
- Location of destinations of regional importance including employment areas, secondary schools, institutions, commercial centres, etc.
- Areas of high potential for increased walking and cycling based on the population density, land use and trip making patterns determined through field surveys and conditions
At the core of the Plan are the walking and cycling networks. The walking network will create accessible pedestrian facilities that meet the regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and best practices in areas such as sidewalk width and crossings to make walking convenient. It will also be important for the Region to consider different aspects, such as land use, densities and building form, landscaping and other elements that will influence the pedestrian trip. The cycling network consists of a variety of different types of cycling facilities suitable for different users (experienced, confident and casual cyclists) on both rural and urban Regional roads. As the network grows and develops, the cycling facilities on various corridors will be refined with input from Regional and Municipal plans, community input and local context.

The walking and cycling networks we shared with you at the last public consultation have been updated and are available for your review online at WalkCycleWR.regionofwaterloo.ca. Updates will be available to view at each public meeting.

Closing The Gaps With Infill Projects

The work that will be required to develop the walking and cycling networks is recommended to be completed along with on-going transportation projects already planned by the Region over the next 10 to 15 years (subject to budget approval). Walk Cycle Waterloo Region recognizes that implementing the network solely in conjunction with road projects will leave gaps that could have a
significant impact on the usability of the network. For this reason, the plan includes a Gaps/Infill Action Plan that details nearly 200 network segments that are recommended for completion within Regional corridors that are not included in the current 10-year plan.

While the overall goal is to close the gaps in the walking and cycling networks within 10 to 15 years, some exceptions will still apply:

1. We plan to build bike routes that connect to destinations. Road segments that do not provide access to destinations are not included in this plan.

2. Our goal is to build bike routes that more people feel comfortable using. In some instances, there simply isn’t enough space to build a suitable bike lane to meet cyclists’ needs. In those cases we’re proposing to use local trails and streets rather than busier Regional roads.

3. Some Regional roads are still in good condition and it would not be cost effective to reconstruct them within the next 20 years to provide cycling facilities.

Local Improvements: The Fix It List Action Plan

Ongoing maintenance and repair of walking and cycling infrastructure will need to occur to ensure the network remains safe and comfortable.

The Fix It Action Plan recognizes there are existing areas that are in need of improvements and maintenance for the overall connectivity, comfort and safety of the network. Projects have been identified by the public, the Active Transportation Advisory Committee and staff.

The full list of the projects included in the Gaps/Infill Action Plan and the Fix It List Action Plan are available for your review within the draft Walk Cycle Waterloo Region report, which is posted on our website at WalkCycleWR.regionofwaterloo.ca or available as a hard copy for viewing at the Region’s customer service desks at 150 Frederick St., Kitchener, 99 Regina St., Waterloo and 150 Main St., Cambridge. If you have accessibility needs and you cannot access the internet or our offices, please call 519-575-4036 to request a printed copy.
Finding Your Way: The Strategic Signage Action Plan

The Strategic Signage Action Plan provides the Region and Area Municipalities with direction for developing route signs for trail and bike networks. The objective is to create an easy to navigate network, with times and destination distances listed on signage to provide clarity and consistency and help riders make informed route decisions.

The different types of signs that are included in the plan are:

- Trail route markers
- Roadway signage
- Regional routes markers
- Distance and destination signage
- Linkage markers

The Plan provides guidance on sign design, layout, location, material and installation, and recommends a coordinated approach with Area Municipalities. Some recommended features of the strategy, such as adding bicycle symbols to existing street name signs to indicate bike routes, would need to be a coordinated effort. A sign plan is recommended for specific corridors and destinations that could be implemented on an incremental basis subject to budget approval.

To ensure the signs meet the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, the Plan recommends pilot testing different design options both on-line and at prominent locations, such as the Trans-Canada Trail.

Implementation Tools

Walk Cycle Waterloo Region includes tools that will help ensure the plan can be successfully implemented. These include:

**Winter Network Action Plan** to help improve consistency in the clearing of bike lanes, sidewalks and trails, ensuring year-round accessibility. A pilot project is recommended to test enhanced winter maintenance practices (subject to budget approval).

**Design Guide** to help the Region plan and design future projects and developments with consideration for bicycle and sidewalk needs, by considering factors such as sidewalk width, accessibility and crosswalks.
**Behavioural Shift Program** that includes initiatives to promote the use of alternatives mode of transportation where possible. By informing the public, we hope to encourage and make it much easier to commute by walking or cycling. An education program will also be required to familiarize all road uses on how to use new facilities along Regional Roads such as bike boxes, multi use trails and cycle tracks.

**Performance Monitoring Action Plan** will help the Region track our progress – how many people have switched to walking and cycling – and monitor trends so that we can adjust the program as required to meet our community’s needs.

**Policy Direction** is also included in Walk Cycle Waterloo Region to ensure existing practices and approaches are updated and new policies developed as required to reflect the directions and goals of the Regional Transportation Master Plan.

Detailed information on these tools can be found at WalkCycleWR.regionofwaterloo.ca.

**Project Funding and Phasing**

Currently there is about $52 million in the Region’s 10-year Transportation Capital Program for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. In order to complete the walking and cycling networks envisioned in Walk Cycle Waterloo Region, an additional $46 million would be required over the next 10 to 15 years. As well, an annual budget for operating and maintenance including Winter Maintenance, the Fix-It List and the Strategic Signage Program will be required. This represents a significant, multi-year financial investment that would first be reviewed and considered by Regional Council before each stage of implementation.
Your Input Is Important!

We want your input. Please take a moment to fill out a comment form or online survey. You can also submit your comments via email, fax or by mail as listed below. The Draft Walk Cycle Waterloo Region report is posted on our website at WalkCycleWR.regionofwaterloo.ca or available as a hard copy for viewing at the Region’s customer service desks at 150 Frederick St. in Kitchener, 99 Regina St. in Waterloo and 150 Main St. in Cambridge. If you have accessibility needs and you cannot access the internet or our offices, please call 519-575-4036 to request a printed copy. Thank you!

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