



Region of Waterloo



GRAND RIVER TRANSIT

Stage 2 ION: Light Rail Transit (LRT) from Kitchener to Cambridge

Public Consultation Centre (PCC) 5

Preston Memorial Auditorium	November 19, 2019	4 to 8 p.m.
Sunbridge Hotel and Conference Centre	November 20, 2019	4 to 8 p.m.
Cambridge City Hall (Bowman Room)	November 21, 2019	2 to 8 p.m.

Public Information Package





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1.0 Introduction

In June 2011, Region of Waterloo Council approved a staged approach to implement Light Rail Transit (LRT) from Waterloo to Cambridge. Stage 1 ION includes LRT from Waterloo to Kitchener (launched June 2019) and ION bus from Kitchener to Cambridge (launched September 2015). Stage 2 ION will see LRT replace ION bus service, creating a continuous LRT system across the Region's three urban centres. After evaluating and analysing many route options with many opportunities for public input, the Project Team presented a preferred route for Regional Council's consideration. Regional Council endorsed this route as the "Preferred Route for Stage 2 ION" in June 2019.





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2.0 Project goals and objectives

- Provide efficient infrastructure**
Move more people in less space.
- Enhance the Region's character and placemaking**
Introduce a strong sense of identity along the rapid transit corridor to attract residents, businesses and visitors alike.
- Promote transit-oriented development**
Support communities that contain a full range of development densities and land uses, including those that are compact, mixed use and pedestrian-friendly.
- Be compatible with adjacent communities and neighbourhoods**
Transform some communities and neighbourhoods while protecting the stability of others and recognizing the need to enhance connectivity.
- Integrate sustainable design**
Enhance the rapid transit system with "green" infrastructure, designs, materials and technologies that encourage sustainability.
- Serve as an investment in the Region's future**
Ensure the Region's economic competitiveness by investing in more sustainable and efficient modes of transportation.
- Preserve natural environments**
Minimize impacts to the natural environment as much as possible and protect outlying areas from urban sprawl.
- Increase transit accessibility and mobility**
Provide accessible transit service to residents including those with low incomes, physical challenges, the elderly and others who do not drive.
- Provide convenient and accessible rapid transit stations**
Develop transit stations as activity centres, incorporating safety, comfort, aesthetics and convenience.
- Engage the community**
Work with the community to minimize any negative effects on residents and businesses.



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3.0 Project background

For more information on the background and history of light rail transit in the Region please refer to the “Why ION?” handout, available at this Public Consultation Centre and online at grt.ca/ION.

4.0 How will light rail benefit the community?

Waterloo Region is at a crossroads – poised to become a large urban centre and an even larger national economic engine in Canada. The benefits of implementing light rail transit are far reaching, and the return on investment is considerable.

Light rail transit benefits the community by:

- Promoting a more sustainable form of development that encourages intensification and development in core areas, which helps protect the farmland, environmentally sensitive landscapes and water protection areas around our urban boundaries.
- Improving air quality by helping to reduce auto use, and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.
- Promoting economic development by attracting jobs and the talented people who contribute to our nationally significant economy.
- Improving public health through the development of more compact urban communities that reduce travel distances and promote walking and cycling.

5.0 Why are we here?

The Region of Waterloo is continuing the planning and consultation process for Stage 2 ION: LRT from Kitchener to Cambridge. Public input is an essential and ongoing component of this process.

The purpose of Public Consultation Centre 5 is to:

- Present the preliminary design for Preferred Route
- Present background on the study process
- Hear your feedback

Given that Regional Council has endorsed the Preferred Route, no further route options are being considered at this time.





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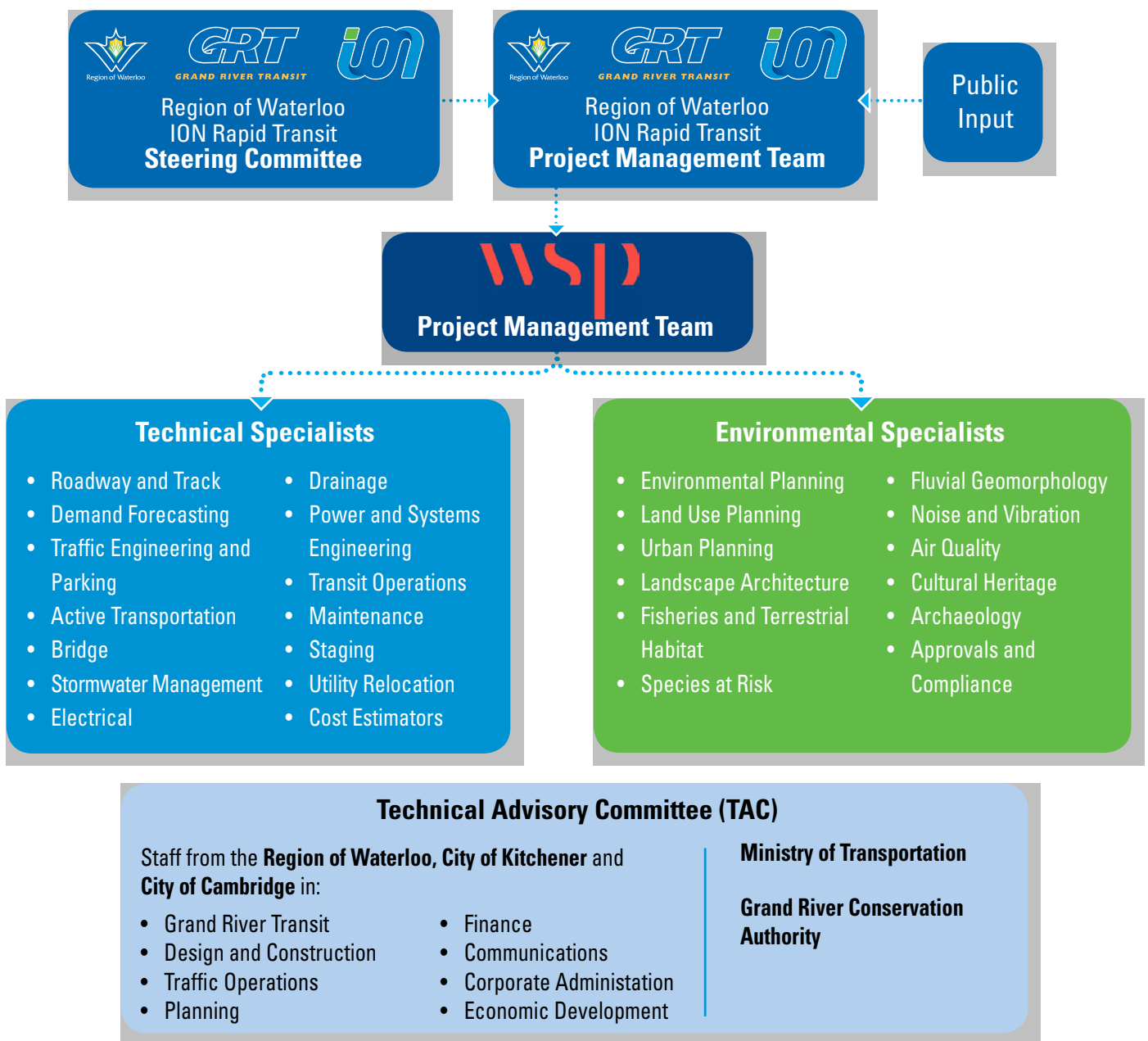
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6.0 Who is leading the project?

The project is being led by the Region of Waterloo’s Project Team. It is made up of several Regional and City staff along with specialists in many areas, supported by a Technical Advisory Committee. The Region has hired a consultant, WSP, to assist with the study, bringing technical expertise from all over North America. Refer to Figure 1 for a chart illustrating the project team, agencies, and other contributors to the project.

Figure 1

Project Team





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7.0 How was the preliminary design created?

The preliminary design presented at this Public Consultation Centre (PCC) is more than a concept, but far from final. These drawings combine background studies and master plans, applicable design guidelines and project-specific design criteria to illustrate what the project will look like when completed. The preliminary design addresses the most significant constraints to make sure that what is proposed will work, and identifies impacts at an appropriate level of detail.

The preliminary design starts with the basic elements needed for a light rail system, such as tracks and stations, along the Preferred Route. It then adds traffic lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks and trails where travelling along existing roadways, and bridges where crossing over a waterway, railway, or provincially-controlled roadway. The tracks and roadways are sized according to applicable guidelines and standards, and positioned carefully to limit impacts. All of this is done while checking for, and avoiding, major issues that would require large changes to the design later.

The preliminary design was based on, or considered:

- The Regional Transportation Master Plan, the Region's Active Transportation Master Plan, and Context Sensitive Transportation Corridor Design Guidelines as a starting point for the roads, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks.
- Applicable freight rail design standards and the operating requirements of CN and CP where the LRT tracks cross their tracks.
- Existing Regional, provincial, and federal design guidelines and standards for roadways, railways and LRT systems.
- Input from the Project Team, the Technical Advisory Committee and regulatory agencies.
- Proximity to, and ability to integrate with, local bus transit.
- Constraints and information about the natural environment, floodplain location, cultural heritage features, pinch points, existing buildings/structures, and more.

8.0 Property impacts

For general information about the Region's property impact identification and property acquisition processes, please refer to Appendix C. Impacts to individual properties as shown on the preliminary design are not necessarily the final impacts. Impacts to individual properties shown here are approximate and based on a preliminary level of design. Property impacts may change based on future design work.



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9.0 What is the cost and timing of the project?

Stage 2 ION is estimated to cost \$1.36 billion*. This includes costs to:

- design and build the system
- purchase property
- relocate utilities
- build storage and maintenance facility
- construct park and ride lots

The cost estimate has been put into future dollars. Construction timing is subject to provincial and federal funding.

It is now anticipated that construction likely won't commence earlier than 2028, and may be later than 2028. The final timing to implement this project is dependent on provincial approval, identification of funding sources, property acquisition, the method of procurement and various other factors.

** This estimate is based on the best information we have right now (30 per cent precision, 5 per cent conceptual design). As we develop the design further we will update the costs accordingly.*

10.0 What are the next steps?

- Complete the business case
- Continue to consult the public
- Present the preliminary design to Regional Council for final endorsement
- Commence the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPA Process)
- Submit provincial and federal funding applications.





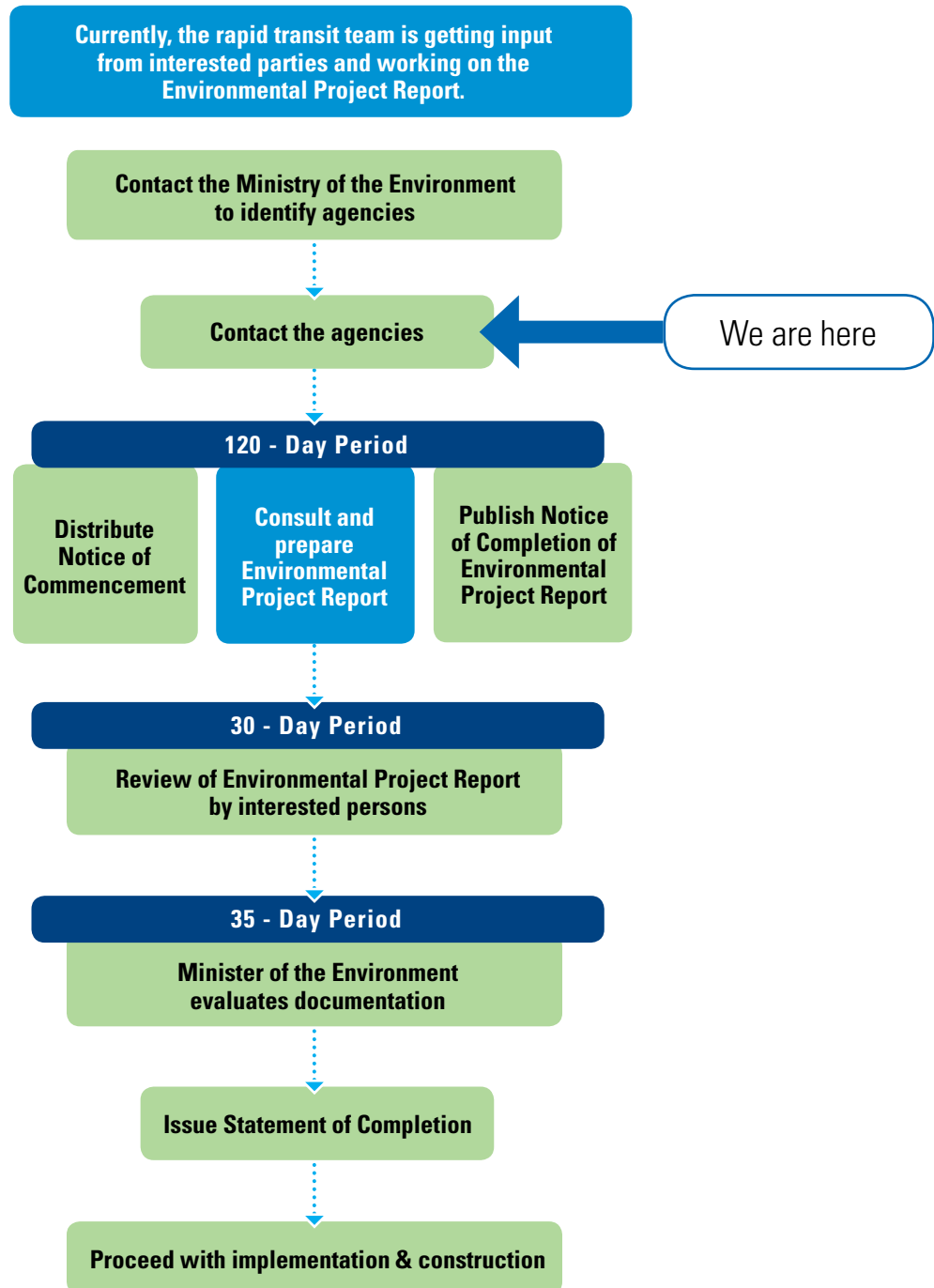
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10.1 What is the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPA Process)?

The Transit Project Assessment (TPA) is a streamlined process, approved by the Province under the Environmental Assessment Act, specifically for transit initiatives. See Figure 2 for a flow chart of the TPA process.

Figure 2





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The TPA regulation provides a framework for focused consultation and objection processes. The Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks may give notice allowing a proponent to proceed with its transit project, but can only take action if there is a potential for a negative impact on a matter of provincial importance that relates to the natural environment or has cultural heritage value of interest, or on a constitutionally protected Aboriginal or treaty right.

The Environmental Project Report (EPR) is a formal document which compiles all of the planning, engineering, and technical inventories, analyses and studies. It includes sections on existing conditions, description of the Preferred Route, potential impacts of the project on the social, economic, and natural environment, and proposed mitigation measures to reduce impacts. The draft EPR will be circulated to technical and regulatory agencies in addition to Indigenous communities

Following PCC 5, the Project Team will present the preliminary design to Regional Council for final endorsement and authority to initiate the formal TPA Process. The TPA will incorporate all of the planning, engineering and technical studies, and analyses which have already been completed or are currently on-going.

Some of the key steps and planned timing for the TPA Process include:

- Distribute “Notice of Commencement” (early 2020)
- Prepare the draft EPR
- Address any comments submitted during the public or Minister’s review periods
- Finalize the EPR, file it for 30-day public review and publish the “Notice of Completion of the Environmental Project Report” (early 2020)





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10.2 What else is the Region of Waterloo, City of Cambridge, and City of Kitchener doing to prepare for Stage 2 ION?

The Region of Waterloo, the City of Cambridge and the City of Kitchener have completed or are currently working on a number of other initiatives, studies, and projects support the implementation of LRT from Kitchener to Cambridge:

- Region's Transit Supportive Strategy for Cambridge allocated \$1,000,000 annually since 2011 to fund initiatives that help to increase transit ridership and/or encourage transit-supportive development within the Central Transit Corridor (CTC) in Cambridge.
- City of Cambridge is completing the Growth and Intensification Study of areas within Cambridge ideal for growth because of access to existing and planned infrastructure, such as transit and services.
- Secondary plans (e.g. Hespeler Road Corridor) are being completed providing policies to encourage development opportunities, increase population, increase employment and ensure the character and stability of established neighbourhoods and commercial areas are maintained and enhanced.
- Cambridge is preparing a new city-wide zoning by-law to incorporate more flexible development standards within the core areas and along Hespeler Road.
- Region's 2018 Transportation Master Plan recommends a strategy which includes planning and implementation of Stage 2 ION as a top priority.
- City of Cambridge's Transportation Master Plan was endorsed in 2019, including support for extension of LRT from Kitchener to Cambridge.
- Region of Waterloo and City of Cambridge offer development charge exemptions in the Core Areas of Cambridge.
- Region of Waterloo and City of Cambridge both offer financial incentives for developments that remediate brownfield sites.
- City of Cambridge created a \$35 million "core areas transformation fund" in 2019 to help improve the city's three cores.

10.3 What about bus service?

LRT will be integrated and coordinated with the realigned Grand River Transit (GRT) bus system to provide an expanded level of service to the LRT stations along primary feeder corridors.

Changes include:

- A system of express routes, like the current iXpress.
- Local bus service along the central transit corridor, servicing additional stops between the LRT stations.
- Connections to intercity transit such as GO Bus and Greyhound.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (real-time scheduling of transit vehicles, transit traveller information and optimization of transit priority).
- The EasyGO fare system.
- Road improvements.



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10.4 What amenities will ION LRT have?

The Stage 2 ION will feature the same amenities as Stage 1 and as the ION bus, such as:

- Enhanced stations
- Modern vehicles
- Express schedules
- Automated ticketing
- Real-time passenger information system
- Bicycle and pedestrian amenities (e.g. bike racks, benches, canopy shelters)
- Connections to intercity transit
- Park and ride facilities

11.0 How will my input be used?

Your comments will be used to:

- Identify issues for preliminary design
- Identify constraints to help reduce impacts
- Identify opportunities for mitigation of impacts

12.0 Where do we go from here?

Following PCC 5:

- the preliminary design and preliminary business case will be presented to Regional Council
- The Transit Project Assessment will be completed, including completion of the Environmental Project Report

After completing the TPA Process:

- The Region will apply for funding from provincial and federal government
- The LRT design will be further developed as required and in support of adjacent capital projects and private developments
- Property acquisition will commence where required/identified
- Construction timing is currently unknown. Construction is not expected to start earlier than 2028, but may be later than 2028.

13.0 Contact information

Transportation Planning

Region of Waterloo

150 Frederick Street, 6th Floor

Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4J3

Phone: 519-575-4400

Fax: 519-745-4040 TTY: 519-575-4608

Email: ION@regionofwaterloo.ca



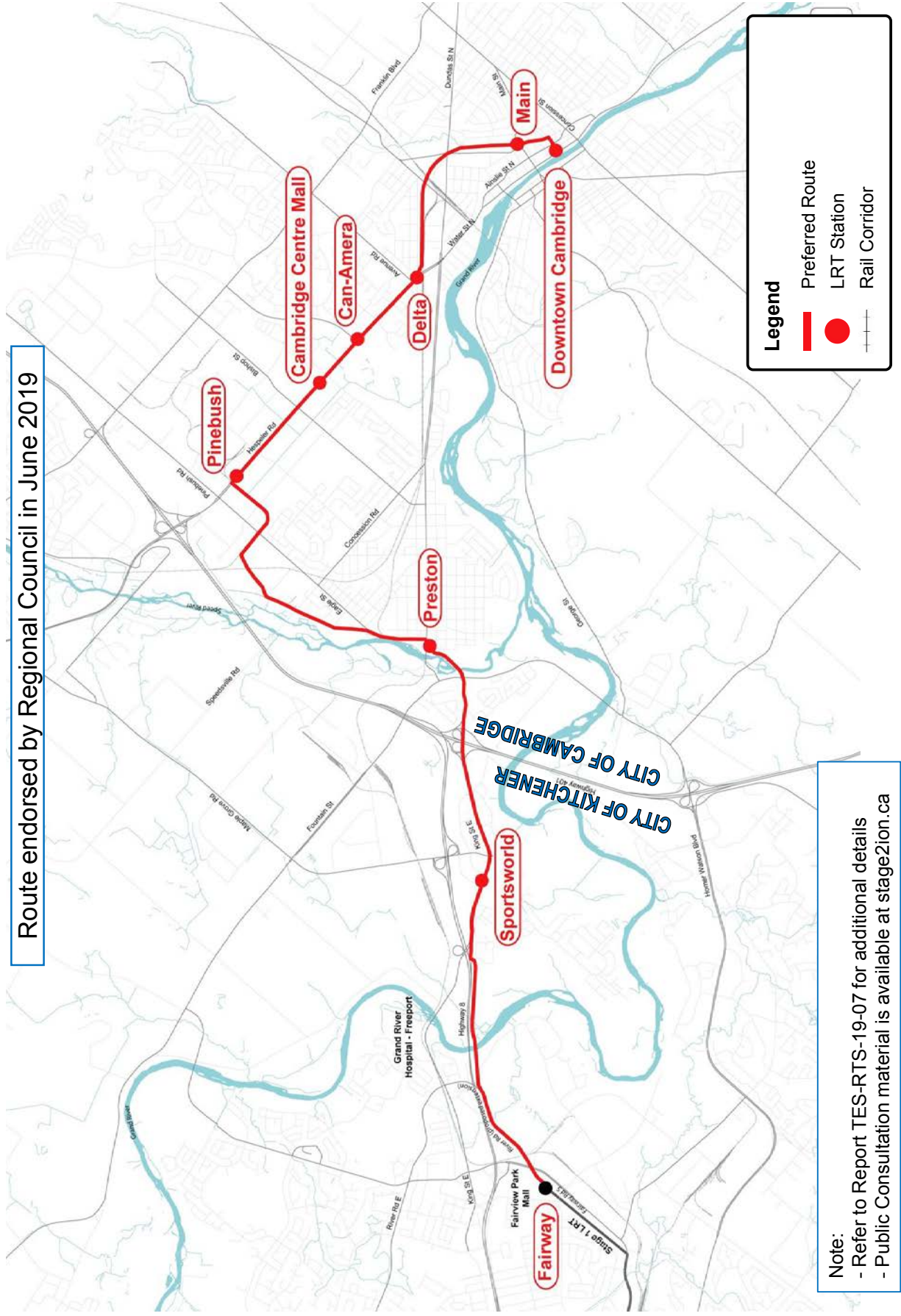


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Appendix A – Map of Preferred Route – Stage 2 ION

Route endorsed by Regional Council in June 2019

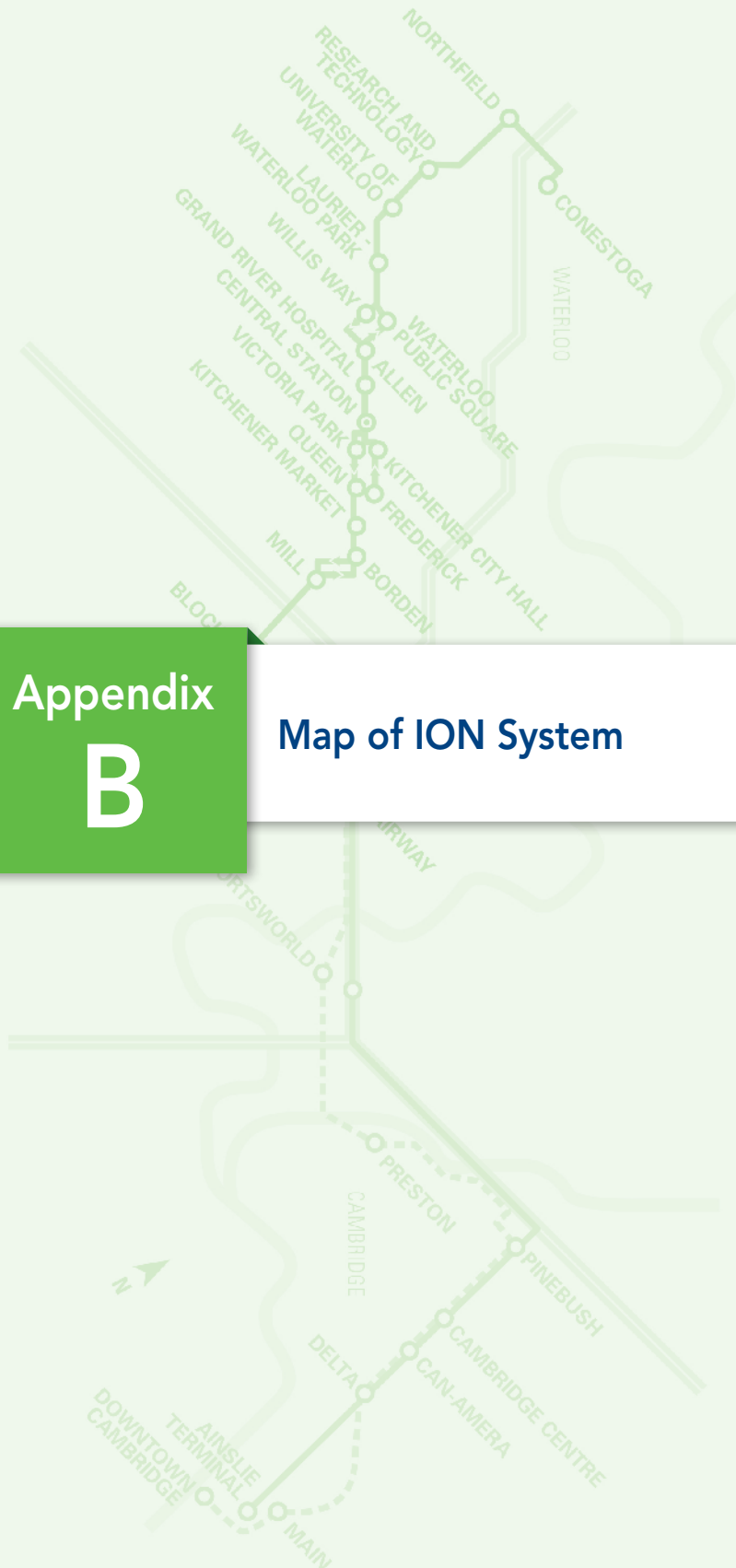


Note:
 - Refer to Report TES-RTS-19-07 for additional details
 - Public Consultation material is available at stage2ion.ca



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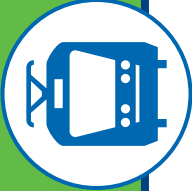
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Appendix

B

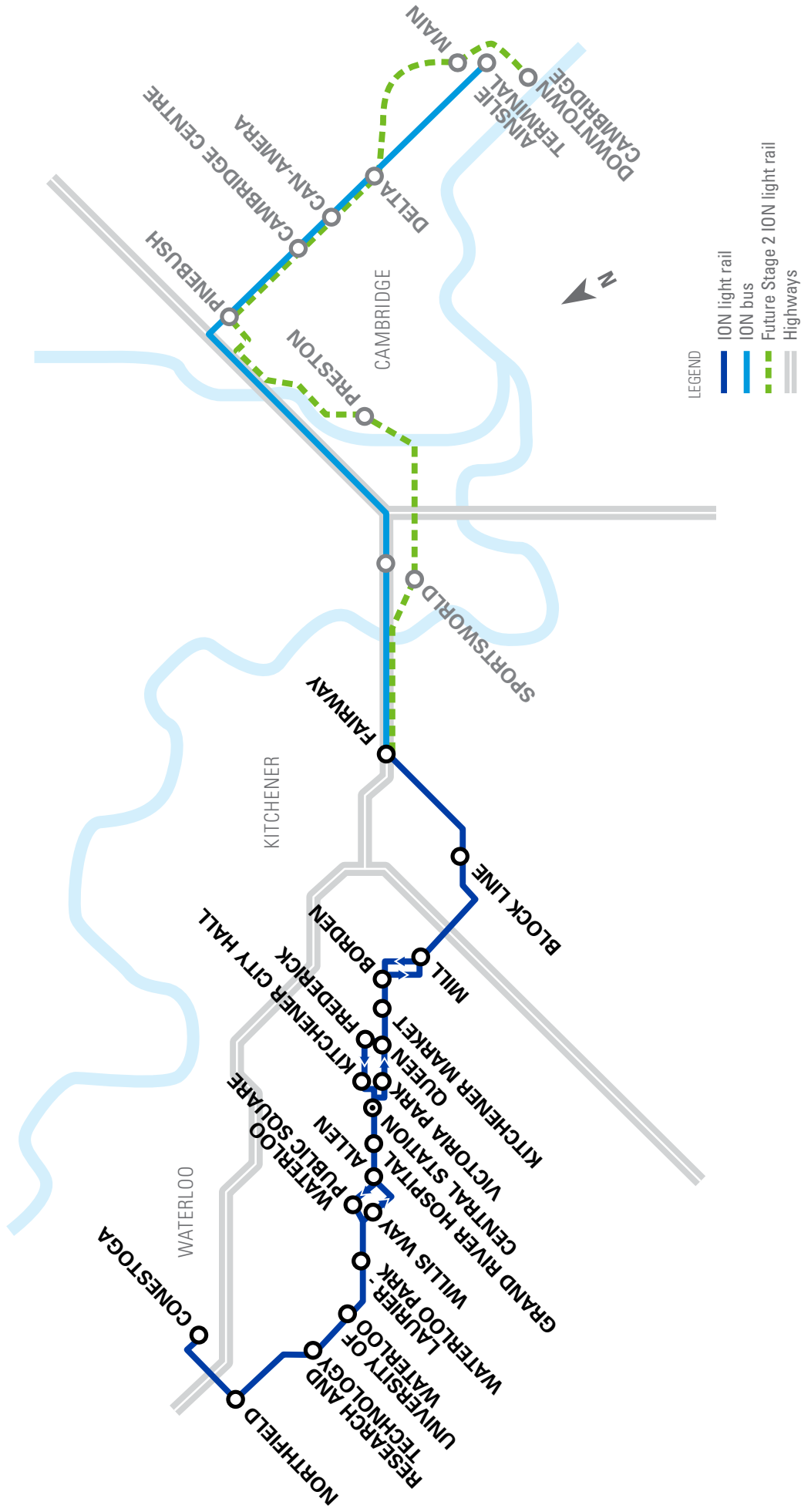
Map of ION System



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Appendix B – Map of ION system





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Appendix

C

Property impacts and property acquisition process



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Appendix C – Property impacts and property acquisition process

Property Impacts

The following information is provided as a general overview of the process to identify property impacts during the Stage 2 ION study. The steps, timing and processes can vary depending on the level of design refinement and on the type of impact. Anticipated property impacts are based on the information available to date and on the project team's assessment and may change as the design progresses.

Types of Property Impacts

Property impacts can take many forms and include partial acquisition, full acquisition ("buyout"), or easement. Partial acquisition typically occurs when a modest widening is required, but the building and the function/use of the property is retained. Full acquisitions are typically identified when a building is impacted, or the function of the property is substantially altered. These are not hard and fast rules or policies, though, and are decided based on the specifics for each property.

Permanent easements are identified when the current owner can retain ownership and use of the property, but the Region, City, or utility company requires periodic access to the property in the future. For example, aerial easements are required when overhead power lines cross private property. Temporary easements are typically related to construction activities such as grading and restoration.

Extent of Property Impacts

The type of property impact shown on the plans are based on the technical team's professional judgement using the current design information to date, which may change

pending future design refinement or through negotiations with the property owner. For some properties the project team can be quite confident that a full acquisition is required. It may be possible to avoid some properties by adjusting the design, but that must be assessed as part of a future design work.

Property Acquisition Process

The following information is provided as a general overview of the property acquisition process and is not legal advice. Further, the steps, timing and processes can vary depending on the individual circumstances of each case.

After the Recommended Design Concept has been endorsed by Regional Council, the property acquisition process and the efforts of Regional real estate staff will focus on acquiring the required lands to implement the approved design. Regional staff cannot make fundamental amendments or changes to the approved design concept.

Property Impact Plans

After the project has been approved and as it approaches final design, the project planners will generate drawings and sketches indicating what lands and interests need to be acquired from each affected property to undertake the project. These drawings are referred to as Property Impact Plans (PIP).

Initial Owner Contact by Regional Real Estate Staff

Once the PIPs are available, Regional real estate staff will contact the affected property owners by telephone and mail to introduce themselves and set-up initial meetings to discuss the project and proposed acquisitions.



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Initial Meetings

The initial meeting is attended by the project engineer and the assigned real estate staff person to brief the owner on the project, what part of their lands are to be acquired or will be affected, what work will be undertaken, when, with what equipment, etc. and to answer any questions. The primary purpose of the meeting is to listen to the owner and identify issues, concerns, effects of the proposed acquisition on remaining lands and businesses that can be feasibly mitigated and/or compensated, and how the remaining property may be restored. These discussions may require additional meetings. The goal of staff is to work with the owner to reach mutually agreeable solutions.

Goal: Fair and equitable settlement for all parties

The goal is always to reach a fair and equitable agreement for both the property owner and the Region. Such an agreement will provide compensation for the fair market value of the lands and address the project impacts (such as repairing or replacing landscaping, fencing, paving) so that the property owner will receive the value of the lands acquired and the restoration of their remaining property to the condition it was in prior to the project. The initial meetings will form the basis of an initial offer of settlement or agreement of purchase and sale for the required lands or interests.

Steps toward offer of settlement or agreement of purchase and sale

The general steps towards such an offer are as follows:

1. the Region will obtain an independent appraisal of the fair market value of the lands and interests to be acquired, and an appraisal of any effect on the value of the rest of the property resulting from the acquisition of the required lands and interests;
2. compensation will be estimated and/or works to minimize other effects will be defined and agreed to by the property owner and the Region;
3. reasonable costs of the owner will be included in any compensation settlement;
4. an offer with a purchase price and any other compensation or works in lieu of compensation will be submitted to the property owner for consideration; and
5. an Agreement will be finalized with any additional discussion, valuations, etc. as may be required.

Depending on the amount of compensation, most agreements will require the approval of Council. The approval is undertaken in Closed Session which is not open to the public to ensure a level of confidentiality.



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Expropriation

Given the time constraints of these projects, it is the practice of the Region to commence the expropriation process in parallel with the negotiation process to insure that lands and interests are acquired in time for commencement of the Project. Typically, over 90% of all required lands and interests are acquired through the negotiation process. Even after lands and interests have been acquired through expropriation an agreement on compensation can be reached through negotiation, this is usually referred to as a 'settlement agreement'.

An expropriation is the transfer of lands or an easement to a governmental authority for reasonable compensation, including payment of fair market value for the transferred lands, without the consent of the property owner being required. In the case of expropriations by municipalities such as the Region of Waterloo, the process set out in the Ontario Expropriations Act must be followed to ensure that the rights of the property owners provided under that Act are protected.

