Public Outreach Efforts
Introduction

Resource scarcity, changing societal perceptions and the transportation challenges faced by growing cities are having a profound effect on urban development in North America.
Public Outreach Efforts

Context: The Region of Waterloo

• Located in southern Ontario about an hour west of Toronto

• Consists of 3 cities: Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo and 4 townships: Wilmot, Woolwich, Wellesley and North Dumfries

• Population forecast to increase from 500,000 to 729,000 by 2031, with most growth directed to the three urban centres
Regional Growth Management Strategy

- A strategic framework with strong and innovative goals for where, when and how future residential and employment growth will be accommodated
- Promotes reurbanization and intensification of the Region's existing built up areas
- Identified rapid transit as a key element to shape the future of the community and address existing and future traffic congestion
Public Outreach Efforts

Rapid Transit in Waterloo Region

- Region of Waterloo implementing a new rapid transit system in order to ease pressure on roadways and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transportation
- New system that will operate primarily in dedicated lanes, separate from traffic, connecting Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo
- Interactive and dynamic public and stakeholder consultation process being employed to get the community actively involved in planning for the changes to come
Public Consultation Methods

The Region of Waterloo has utilized both traditional and innovative public consultation methods to engage the community, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Public consultation centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interactive Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted meetings with municipal staff, key stakeholders and interest groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media releases and radio/TV interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted and mass mail-outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rapid Transit infoline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information displays at community events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modelling of future land use and roadway configuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rapid Transit video at each step of the planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spin-off projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public Consultation Centres

• Formal public consultation sessions presenting the most updated project information, as well as background material and future project phases
• PCC hosted at separate venues in each of the three cities for each new project step
• Format includes: display boards, presentations, videos, hand-outs and comment forms, interactive displays, and staff available to answer questions
Public Outreach Efforts

Interactive Workshops

- Communication tool used to provide updated information on RT initiative, as well as facilitate self-directed discussions amongst groups and individuals.

- Encourage participants to provide input on a wide variety of topics and issues related to Rapid Transit in Waterloo Region.
Targeted Meetings

• Meetings to involve specific stakeholders, community members, neighbourhood associations and other specific groups within the study area
• Used to present sensitive information and obtain valuable insight from groups that are directly impacted by the project or have expressed specific concerns
Public Outreach Efforts

Media Releases and Radio/TV Interviews

- Media informed of updated project information as well as meeting dates and locations at each stage of the EA
- Advertisements placed in newspaper, radio and television spots
- Regional representatives meet regularly with media prior to specific public meetings to provide necessary background information
- Media invited to attend public consultation centres and other public awareness activities
Rapid Transit Newsletter

• Published newsletter providing regular updates on the project with articles focused on topics related to each stage of the EA, as well as information about upcoming public involvement opportunities

• Sent to every household in the Region
Public Outreach Efforts

Targeted and Mass Mail-outs

- Mass mail-outs to every household in the Region to inform public of major project steps and associated public meetings
- Targeted mail-outs to rapid transit contact list regarding updates to the EA process, website, community involvement opportunities etc. on a regular basis
- Targeted mail-outs to specific residents or stakeholders who may be more affected by project decisions
Public Outreach Efforts

Project Website

- Website devoted to Rapid Transit Initiative providing up to date information on the EA process, background information on the project, access to all publications and visualizations, and information on how to become involved

http://transitea.region.waterloo.on.ca/
Public Outreach Efforts

Social Networking

- Rapid Transit Initiative Facebook Fan Page
  - Currently has 132 members
  - Allows members to receive regular project updates, view project material and provide opinions
  - Provides opportunities for discussion
Public Outreach Efforts

Rapid Transit Infoline

- Direct telephone line devoted completely to the Rapid Transit project
- Staff member available to address any concerns or answer any questions related to the project
Public Outreach Efforts

Information Displays at Community Events

• Series of staffed displays located at popular public events used to increase project awareness and education to individuals who may not traditionally become involved

• Past events include K-W Multicultural Festival and Waterloo Buskers Festival
Public Outreach Efforts

Business Visits

- **Personal** visits to all businesses located along proposed routes and within proposed station areas
- Outlined **various benefits** and potential impacts to businesses
- Allowed personal contact with small business owners who are less likely to participate in public consultation sessions
Public Outreach Efforts

Photo Montages and Renderings

- Effective tool to give the public a clear picture of how the system will operate and the potential impacts on surrounding landscapes

Duke St., Kitchener, Before…
Public Outreach Efforts

Current TOD Projects
Public Outreach Efforts

3-D Models

- Prepared to visually display future land use, new roadway configurations, and traffic operations
Rapid Transit Videos

- Videos prepared and presented at each step of the planning process in order to communicate important ideas and visualizations to the public in a comprehensive and concise manner
- Shown at public meetings and posted on project website
Public Outreach Efforts

Station Area Plan Pilot Project

- **Stations - Focus for reurbanization**
- **Reurbanization objectives**
  - More compact urban form
  - Vibrant street level development
  - Pedestrian friendly urban design
Public Outreach Efforts

Station Area Planning Pilot Project
Visualizing Densities Project

Midrise Apartment Building
10 Ellen Street, Kitchener

DENSITY: 231
People/jobs per hectare

Stacked Townhomes
265 Lawrence Avenue, Kitchener

DENSITY: 230 est.
People/jobs per hectare
Conclusions

The use of the techniques described in this presentation have sparked an incredible response in Waterloo Region. The use of both these traditional and new communication tools have the ability to garnish wide-spread community support and interest in planning projects.

The communication methods employed by the rapid transit team are helping planners design this system from the bottom-up, successfully reshaping the transportation options of Waterloo Region in an energy challenged future.