

Regional Update

Rotary Club of Cambridge (Preston-Hespeler)
Regional Councillor Helen Jowett
Thursday, October 8, 2020

Innovative Waterloo Region



Intro VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNNe2B8BHC0>

Enter COVID-19

- ▶ In early 2020, COVID-19 was a known, emerging virus, we read about it in the news, and public health was tracking and monitoring but it had little impact on our day to day in Waterloo Region
- ▶ Life as we knew it was about to change drastically...

COVID TIMES: A community response

- ▶ Resiliency of our community during the "lock down" to support each other, increased need in social services, food insecurities, housing supports
- ▶ Community caring & volunteers at local organizations
- ▶ Diverse, resilient economy
 - ▶ BEST WR (Business and Economic Support Team of Waterloo Region)
 - ▶ Innovation of local tech companies to shift production
 - ▶ InkSmith production of 3D PPE *The Community Shield* for front line workers
- ▶ Adapting technology and shifting to an online workforce & shifting role of the parent

COVID TIMES: A regional response

- ▶ Emergency shelters established
- ▶ Provided free transit & emergency child care for essential workers
- ▶ Role of public health locally - weekly media updates, testing, dashboard reporting
- ▶ COVID-19 Economic Recovery Committee
- ▶ Community engagement at an all time high
 - ▶ Thousands marched in the Black Lives Matter March on June 3, 2020 in downtown Kitchener
 - ▶ Increase in petitions received by Regional Chair & Council
 - ▶ Active Transportation: re-allocation of road space for bike lanes

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Working with community partners to deliver services
- ▶ Collaboration between levels of government: city, region, province & federal
- ▶ There is a well known African saying:

If you want to travel quickly; go alone

If you want to travel far go in a group

New Realities – New opportunities

"Build Back Better"

- ▶ Walking with our Indigenous community, continued learning and growth
- ▶ Building an indigenous sweat lodge in partnership with WLU at the Waterloo Regional Museum
- ▶ Anti-Racism Initiative
- ▶ Economic Recovery – Pivot Announcement at YKF
- ▶ Infrastructure Investments: Stage 2 LRT to Cambridge, Eastside Lands Development

Where do we go from here?

Discussion points:

- ▶ New reality of COVID-19, vaccine and/or treatments for COVID-19 is not expected by experts until early 2021 at best.
- ▶ Mask by-law extension
- ▶ Reviewing Regional priorities with new economic reality
- ▶ Virtual gatherings, workplaces, and community connections. Missing link of social interaction, are gone the days of "talking to strangers"?
- ▶ What does this mean for post secondary in Waterloo Region?

Anti-Racism Initiative and the Path Forward

- ▶ Regional Council unanimously passed a motion on June 16, 2020 following the Black Lives Matter march in our community.
- ▶ We confirmed our commitment to address racism by supporting policies and programs that address the inequities that members of the Black community continue to experience within Waterloo Region. We committed to action.
- ▶ On July 30th and 31st we hosted Anti-Racism Town Halls where we heard from community members to help shape the direction of the Region's Anti-Racism Plan.
- ▶ A Selection Committee was established to develop the application, selection criteria, and mandate for the Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group.

Anti-Racism Initiative and the Path Forward

Key Mandate: The Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group will provide recommendations, advice and information to Region of Waterloo Council related to the development and implementation of an Anti-Racism Plan with a goal of eliminating systemic racism within the workplace and services delivered by the Region of Waterloo.

Responsibilities:

- ▶ Review input received from the community as well as pre-existing community research and consultation information that explains where the Region should focus its efforts.
- ▶ Develop recommendations for Council for a Region of Waterloo Anti-Racism Plan.
- ▶ Advise the Region on the development and review of policies and practices that support greater inclusion and diversity in the workplace and service delivery.
- ▶ Will monitor progress, and guide implementation and evaluation.

Anti-Racism Initiative and the Path Forward

- ▶ Applications for the Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group closed on October 5th.
- ▶ We know that we need to make meaningful changes in programs, services, and policies, in order to address systematic racism and oppression in a meaningful and impactful way, and Council looks forward to the recommendations that will be brought forward from this community-led Working Group.
- ▶ In addition to the Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group, Council has directed regional staff to report back with an update on two internal initiatives: The Five Year Diversity and Inclusion Plan, and The First Nations, Metis and Indigenous Working Group.

Stage 2 ION

Light Rail Transit from Kitchener to Cambridge

WHY LRT?

- ▶ ION is the foundation for the Regional Official Plan objectives:



LRT will:

- ▶ Help contain urban sprawl
- ▶ Protect environmentally-sensitive areas
- ▶ Preserve farmland and the rural lifestyle
- ▶ Move people; create transportation choice

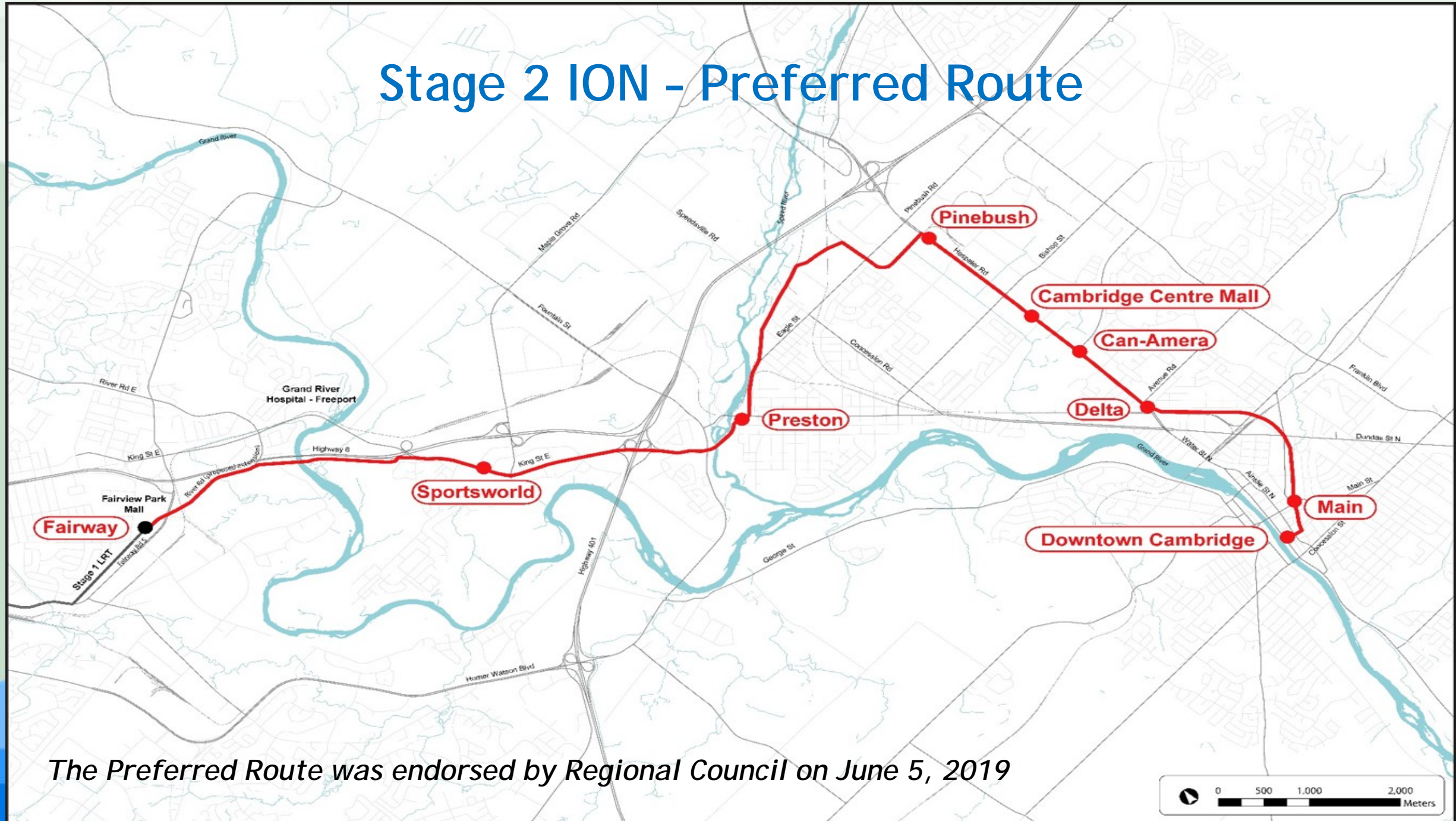
Stage 2 ION

Light Rail Transit from Kitchener to Cambridge

Stage 1 ION - Opened June 2019



Stage 2 ION - Preferred Route



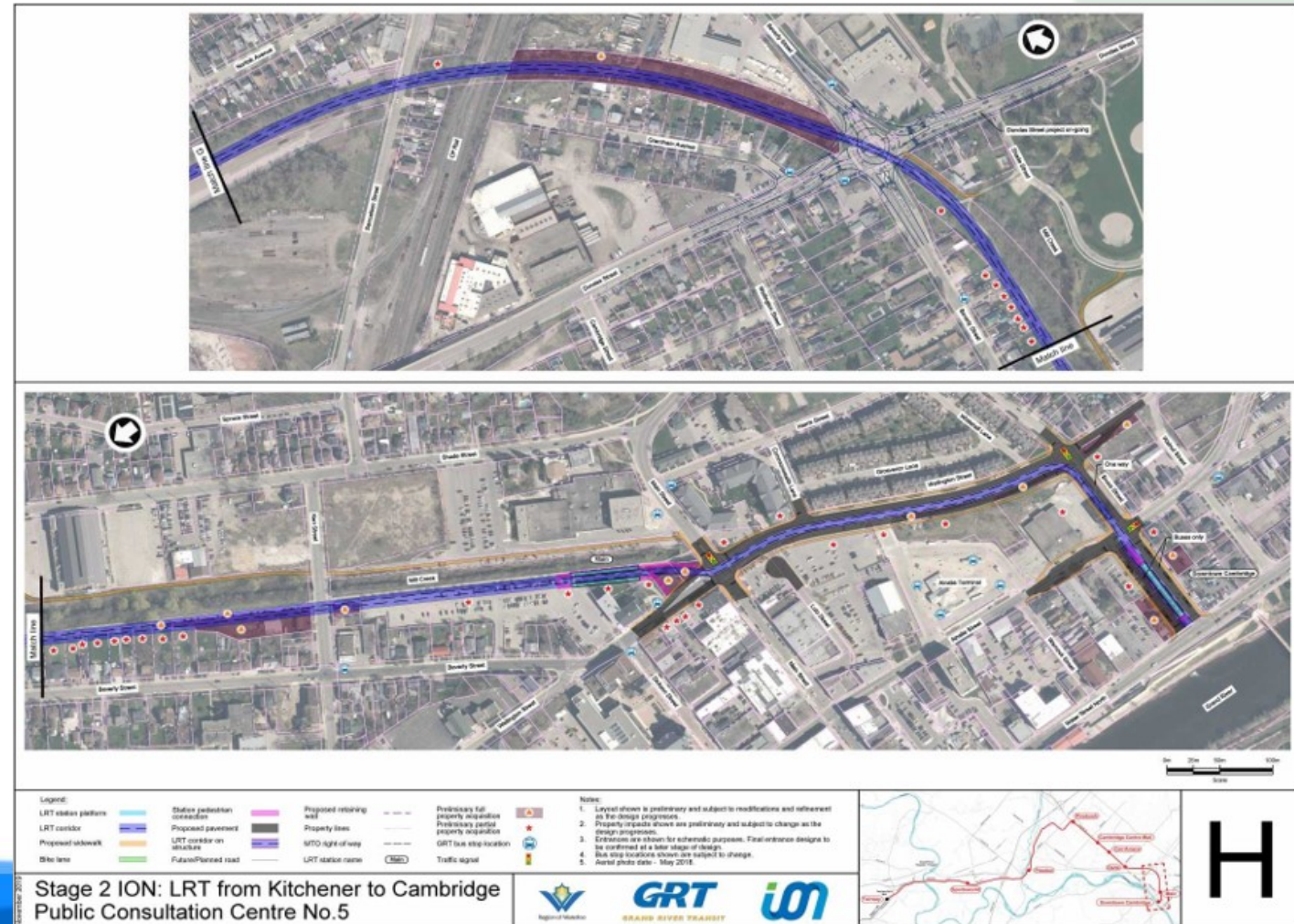
The Preferred Route was endorsed by Regional Council on June 5, 2019

Stage 2 ION

Light Rail Transit from Kitchener to Cambridge

Preliminary Design

- Preliminary Design was endorsed by Regional Council in April 2020.



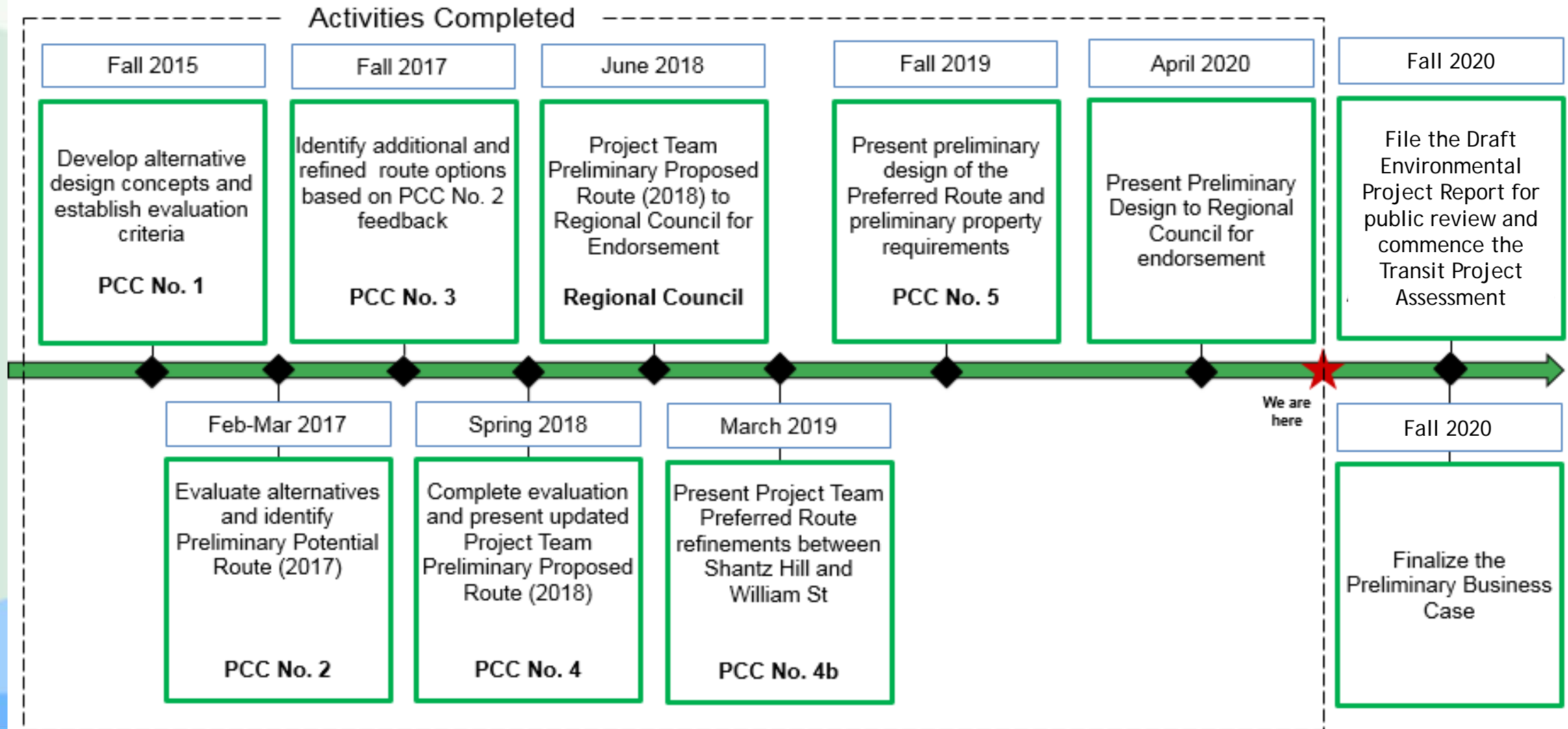
Stage 2 ION

Light Rail Transit from Kitchener to Cambridge

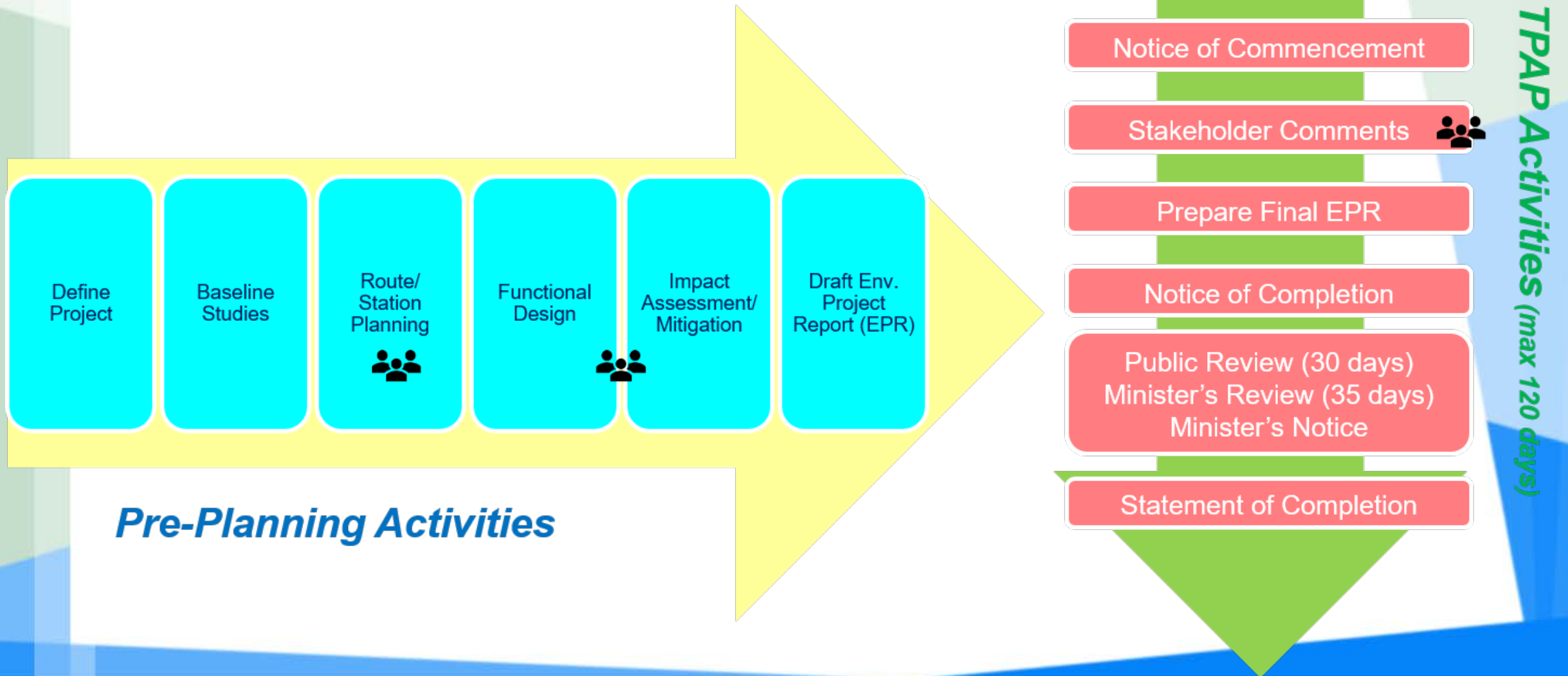
Study Activities

- ▶ Pre-planning/technical studies
- ▶ Public Consultation - Route and design
- ▶ Preliminary design
- ▶ Environmental Project Report
- ▶ Consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities, key stakeholders and regulatory authorities
- ▶ Transit Project Assessment Process

Study Timeline



Transit Project Assessment Process



Stage 2 ION

Light Rail Transit from Kitchener to Cambridge

Future Work

After the TPA the Region will need to undertake the following:

- ▶ Post-TPA studies and reports
- ▶ Due diligence investigations
- ▶ Property acquisition
- ▶ Detailed engineering and design
- ▶ Utility relocations
- ▶ Procurement



Council Composition Review

- The Region of Waterloo is required by the *Municipal Act* to conduct a review of Regional Council's composition by the end of 2020.



Council Composition Review

- ▶ The current structure has 16 members of Council total consisting of: the Regional Chair; the seven mayors of the area municipalities (Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich); as well as the directly elected representatives of Cambridge (2), Kitchener (4) and Waterloo (2).
- ▶ This composition of Council was put in place in 2000.



Council Composition Review

- ▶ Regional Clerk staff proposed the following options for Council Composition:
 - ▶ The status quo (16 members of Council);
 - ▶ An allocation of one Regional Councillor per 25,000 residents in an area municipality, based on largest Township population (24 members of Council);
 - ▶ An overall target of 30,000 residents per Regional Councillor for all of Regional Council, based on previous representation (20 members of Council); and
 - ▶ A system of combined urban and rural representatives (19 members of Council)
- ▶ These options were presented to the area municipalities, as well as members of the public on the EngageWR platform for input.

Council Composition Review



► Triple Majority

- Regardless of which option is selected it must be endorsed by:
 - a majority of the votes on Regional Council;
 - supportive resolutions from a majority of the Councils of the area municipalities; and
 - the area municipalities that have passed resolutions consenting to the by-law, or the resolution, must represent a majority of the electors in the Region.

Council Composition Review

► Public Survey Results

Preferred Option	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Option 1	191	39	42	86
Option 2	43	58	70	158
Option 3	35	102	170	22
Option 4	103	136	44	57

Council Composition Review



- ▶ Regional Council selected Option 1 (Status Quo) as its preferred option on September 23rd.
- ▶ Cambridge, Waterloo, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich Councils have supported Option 1.
- ▶ Kitchener and North Dumfries Councils have expressed a desire for double direct representation as an alternative model.

Council Composition Review



► Next Steps

- September 30 - Council held a Public Meeting for public input.
- October 14 - Council to pass its intention to confirm, or amend, the current composition of Council.
- October 15-November 20 - Seek triple majority approval from the Area Municipal Councils.
- November 25 - Approve either a resolution in support of the current composition or a by-law changing the composition of Council.