

**Majority of Residents in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge  
Strongly Support Referendum on Proposed LRT**  
*After Learning Costs of Proposed System, More Residents  
Oppose (48%) than Support (39%) Region's Proposed LRT Plan*

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**Kitchener, ON** – In the face of a controversial plan proposed by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo to build light-rail transit in Kitchener and Waterloo, along with rapid buses extending into Cambridge, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Taxpayers for Sensible Transit has revealed that eight in ten (83%) ‘agree’ that ‘the Region of Waterloo should hold a referendum on its proposed light-rail transit system before making a final decision’. Moreover, 59% ‘strongly agree’ with this sentiment, and 24% ‘somewhat agree’. Conversely, only two in ten (16%) ‘disagree’ (9% strongly/7% somewhat), while 2% don’t know. Desire for a referendum is strong among all demographic groups studied, including among those who support (75%) the region’s plan and those who oppose (89%) it.

While nearly two in three (63%) residents are ‘familiar’ with the proposal, just 17% say that they are ‘very familiar’ while 46% are just ‘somewhat familiar’. Four in ten (36%) are ‘not familiar’ (16% not at all/20% not very) with the proposed plan.

Various options for rapid transit were presented by the region for consideration. Thinking about which of the following plans they prefer in principle, one in three (32%) support ‘the transit system we currently have in place, with gradual improvements to the existing bus and road system’. While nearly two in three (64%) support some sort of change to the existing system, there is no consensus on which type of change is best: full light rail from Waterloo to

Cambridge (26%), some combination of light rail in Kitchener and Waterloo and rapid buses in Cambridge (23%) or full rapid bus system from Waterloo to Cambridge (15%).

Regional government's proposed plan is a combination of two separate technologies. It calls for electric trains on dedicated lanes in Kitchener and Waterloo, running between Conestoga Mall and Fairview Park Mall. Buses driving in mixed traffic with features to avoid congestion would run to the Ainslie Street terminal in Cambridge. Thinking about this plan in principle – with no price tag attached – just one half (50%) ‘support’ (18% strongly/33% somewhat) the plan, compared to one in three (31%) who ‘oppose’ (19% strongly/12% somewhat) it, and 18% neither support nor oppose it.

But the estimated capital cost of the region's rapid transit proposal is \$818 million. After contributions from the federal and provincial governments, the cost to the Region is \$253 million. This will require a total tax increase of 10.5 percent over seven years. For an average household, this would amount to approximately \$700 over those seven years. Knowing the cost to the region, and ultimately to taxpayers in Waterloo Region, more residents ‘oppose’ (48% -- 33% strongly/15% somewhat) the plan than ‘support’ (39% -- 16% strongly/24% somewhat) it.

If the current plan – a combination of trains in Kitchener and Waterloo and rapid buses in Cambridge – goes forward and is implemented, 8% of residents say they’d use this form of rapid transit on a daily basis, while 11% would use it weekly, 23% occasionally, 21% rarely and 36% never. This compares to 8% of residents who use the current GRT system on a daily basis, weekly (7%), occasionally (13%), rarely (21%) or never (51%).



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*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Taxpayers for Sensible Transit from May 13 to 17, 2011. For the survey, a representative randomly-selected sample of 1,025 adult Canadians living in Kitchener, Waterloo or Cambridge was interviewed by telephone (including cellphone). Further, quotas based on age were implemented to ensure proper age representation across the sample. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age composition reflects that of the actual population according to Waterloo Regional population estimates.*

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