

WHAT **could it be?**

**Imagining
a Just,
Green
Waterloo
Region
by 2030**

50x30 + BRIDGE

In the next 10 years we will require transformative action to address the worsening impacts of the climate crisis both here in Waterloo Region and around the world - but what will these changes look like?

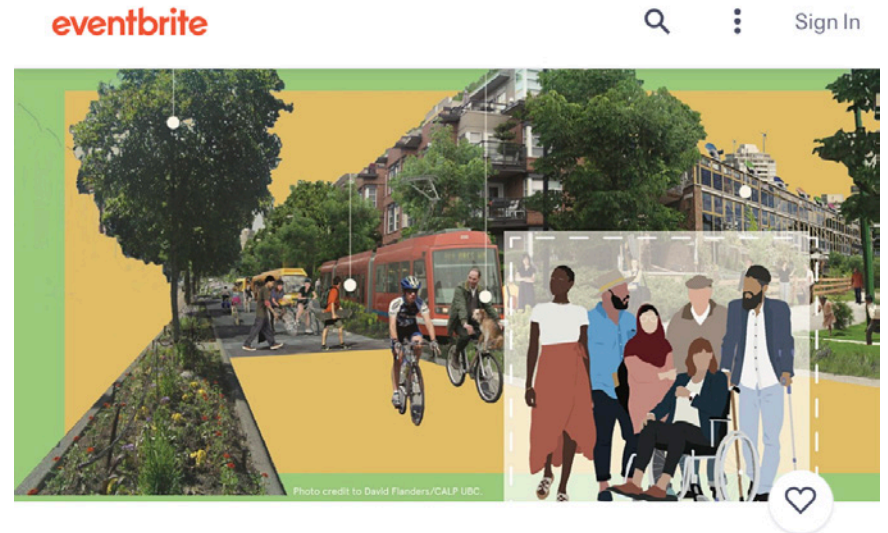
Over a 2-hour visualization workshop, residents throughout the region were asked to imagine imperative changes to help us all move towards a more climate-friendly, socially just Waterloo Region. 50x30WR aims to inspire our communities to help reduce GHG emissions 50% by 2030, in line with climate science, while centring community well-being and social justice. Together, we can create a beautiful, thriving, climate-friendly Waterloo Region!

PROCESS

Nearly 70 participants from across Waterloo Region joined in this workshop, which took place via Zoom video conferencing on Saturday, November 28, 2020.

During the workshop, participants were divided into seven distinct 'Zoom breakout rooms', one for each separate municipality within Waterloo Region. Existing street/landscape scenes from the Region, taken from Google Maps, were then used as canvasses to build upon for this exercise, using digital cutouts and drawing to reimagine what these spaces could be. Miro boards were used by participants to conceptualize alternative landscapes, rural/urban design and alternative futures throughout the Region. The central question participants were asked to explore was "*What changes could take place to build a more just, green Waterloo Region in that specific area?*"

The workshop was co-hosted by 50x30WR, a grassroots climate justice campaign based in Waterloo Region, and the BRIDGE Centre for Architecture + Design, a student-led centre at the University of Waterloo. For more information on the event see [here](#).



NOV
28

Imagining a Just, Green Waterloo Region by 2030

by 50x30WR and BRIDGE Centre for Architecture + Design

Follow

50x30WR and BRIDGE are hosting a FREE online visualization workshop for a just, low-carbon Waterloo Region - join us!

Date And Time

Sat, November 28,
2020

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
EST

WATERLOO

MORE TREES

(downtown Toronto is a great example)

More **energy efficient** buildings! Less high-rise luxury condos

There is so much great architecture here! Now how to make some older buildings more energy efficient...

It's pleasant to walk to Kitchener Farmer's Market! But not St. Jacobs...

Allow Waterloo Park to seep into this area... **Build a community center for the indigenous peoples?**

ENCOURAGE walking

Food trucks to attract people and encourage non-energy demanding social interaction



TRANSFORMING UPTOWN'S INFAMOUS TRANSPORTATION HUB:



More **data collection** regarding demographics in relation to car usage

There's a difference between **owning a car** and **using a car**

Make Erb Street **two-way**

Make it safer for the **elderly and young children**

Make Erb more pleasant to cross... **not an avoidance**



Large parking lot, where the GRT and cars **act as feeders to the LRT**

Original



Erb Street and Caroline Street

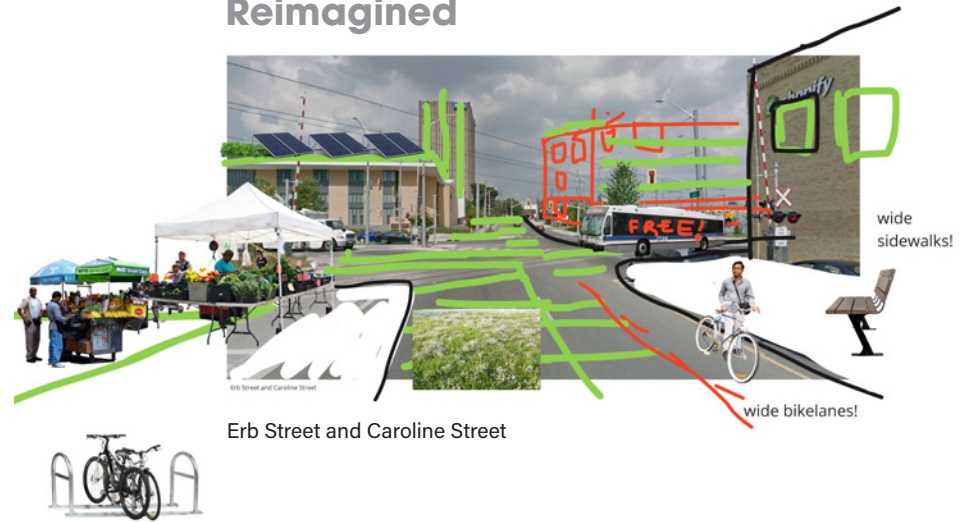


University of Waterloo Ring Road

Reimagined



Reimagined



Erb Street and Caroline Street

Notes from the group

For the two streetscapes we worked, we brainstormed how the following features could improve these areas:

- Add roof gardens
- Widen sidewalks and bike lanes where they are lacking
- Grow vertical gardens on building walls.
- Build mid-level residential, not tall condos
- Improve transit connectivity (next step)

On Heritage: We appreciated the preservation of the Seagrams heritage buildings and their conversion to office and retail space.

On Transit: Transportation is the largest contributor to CO2 emissions in Waterloo Region. We would like to see free public transit to motivate residents to get out of their cars. Free public services are essential for those below the poverty line

In Strasbourg, France air quality and cancer rates became a more politically available way to advocate for affordable and accessible public transit than climate considerations.

On Food Security: The 50x30 Food Security Working Group actively sought BIPOC participation. The medicine wheel became our frame for food security. Young, black, urban farmers stressed the need to use an anti- black racism lens.

KITCHENER

Heather Dubbeldam -
NL cyclical
infrastructure - city as
organisms. Circular
waste cycle - biomass
as fuel - use for heating
sidewalks

Heated sidewalks?
Making sidewalks
accessible in
winter to
everyone. Sand?
Beet juice.

Can permeable
sidewalks
handle Canada's
freeze thaw
cycle?

Addressing issues of
road salt leaking
into ground through
green
spaces/permeable
sidewalks

Fruit trees
along King
Street! -
Tamara

Skating rink/path -
exploring
downtown
Kitchener through
skates!

Service berries
are everywhere
right now!
Neighbours in full
harvest mode -
Rebecca



King Street and Frederick Street - Reimagined

Original



King Street and Frederick Street

Original



King Street East and Eby Street

Reimagined



King Street and Frederick Street

Reimagined



Google Earth

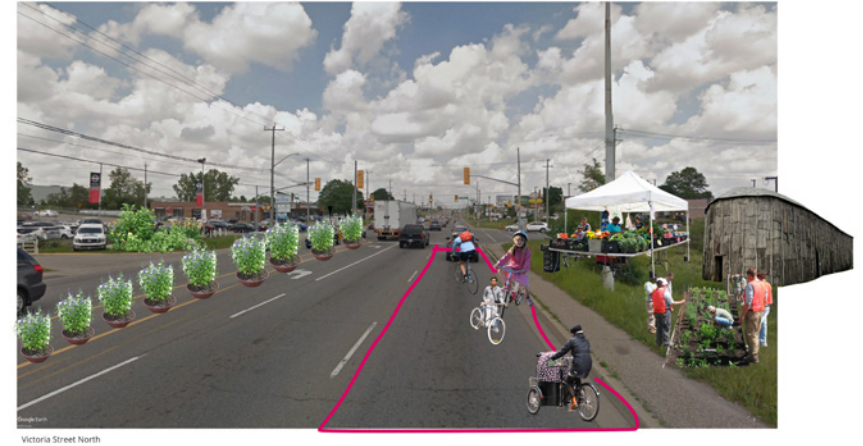


Google Earth

Notes from the group

City streets were all once land that belonged to families . 66 Ft. Row's were taken as 33 ft. From each family to create the places to move without having to ask permission of a neighbouring family or clan . They became common & available to all for use for city residents & visitors. Front yards or setbacks became places where by law (agreement) families would not build, creating a kind of open space owned but given over to all in addition to the 66 ft. Originally taken. Over time, at times cities took land from owners by fiat or purchase to add to what those in power at the time deemed " the greater good for all" More recently land that has been assembled by new owners is given to the new owners by the city and/or these owners are allowed to build on what was the front yards (building setbacks of previous generations).

Reimagined



Original



Victoria Street North, Kitchener



A wide-angle street view of a city intersection in Chicago. On the left, a historic brick building with a 'ZZA' sign and a '47th' street sign is visible. A silver car is parked in the foreground. In the center, a wide street with traffic lights and a crosswalk leads towards a modern glass skyscraper in the background. On the right, a modern building with large white columns and a red facade is partially visible. A flagpole with the Illinois state flag stands near the intersection. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text 'Google Earth' is visible in the bottom left corner.

King St, Kitchener City Hall

Google Earth

Fruit Trees!

Street Art!

Pedestrian Access only!

Anti-homeless/hostile street furniture - what to do? Also an accessibility issue

Addressing issues of road salt leaking into ground through green spaces/permeable sidewalks

Green roof tax break by city - encourage private (e.g., in particular) - Susan

Post apocalyptic landscapes? Installations

- Interest in a friendship centre @ Woodside site
- Interest in Indigenous art downtown
- We discussed the possibility of district energy at Victoria & King. It was shared that we could follow Copenhagen and incinerate garbage to offset potential need for natural gas

- “We seem to be reacting to development proposals rather than designing an urban landscape. That means that we are not really designing how we are going to live but rather creating a mishmash of design plans, heights and building types, with little attention to the people who will live in the city.”**

Both a community member and Councilor identified the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal as an issue for individual municipalities looking to be bold

Affordable housing needs to be decoupled from environmental racism – ie. mount trashmore next to chandler mowat. We need to consider these things together, holistically: ie when building affordable housing, do we consider food security, waste management etc.?

Vision for eliminating parking lots b/c self-driving cars pick us up and drop off and then move to the next person

Vision for fully walkable, bikable city was shared

If we closed King St to traffic, could we take the same opp. to rename it?

Lots of talk of more interdependence, "food is a great way to bring people together".

CAMBRIDGE



A city designed as a habitat not for humans, but all kinds of organisms

The amount and placement of plants might be haphazard , But it would just help for biophilia

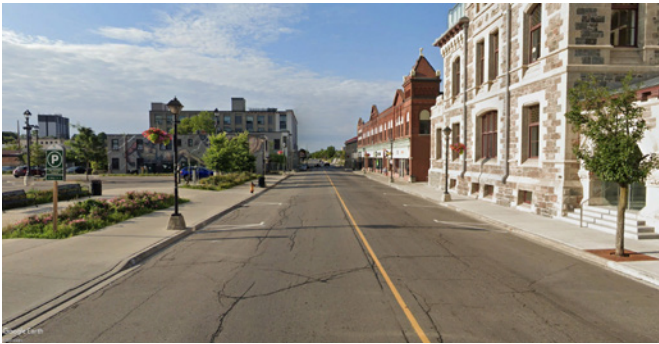
Even images of climate Utopia feels like too much....
I think I have to break it up with a giant goose.

Cambridge City Hall - Reimagined

Original



Cambridge City Hall



Old Post Office



Notes from the group

What strikes me the most in our breakout room is the diversity of the participants. From senior architects who had decades of professional practice in the region, to Waterloo undergraduate students from different parts of Canada, everyone shares a passion for climate action and social justice.

We talked about issues of urban sprawl, "green" interventions of built spaces, to the anxiety surrounding the doomsday narrative of climate change, by exchanging personal experiences and presenting professional critiques. We concluded that we have more power and reassurance if we, as a community, form a collaborative force to address the issues and envision a better future.

It seems that politicians have an imperative to boost economy but neglect what is actually important - protect life and our species. It's important to set targets - we have to be ambitious.

Planners have eliminated most of the housing in DT, people want back yards and have moved to get them. We are going to have to put a lot of parking lots for pedestrians to get to this image of the future.

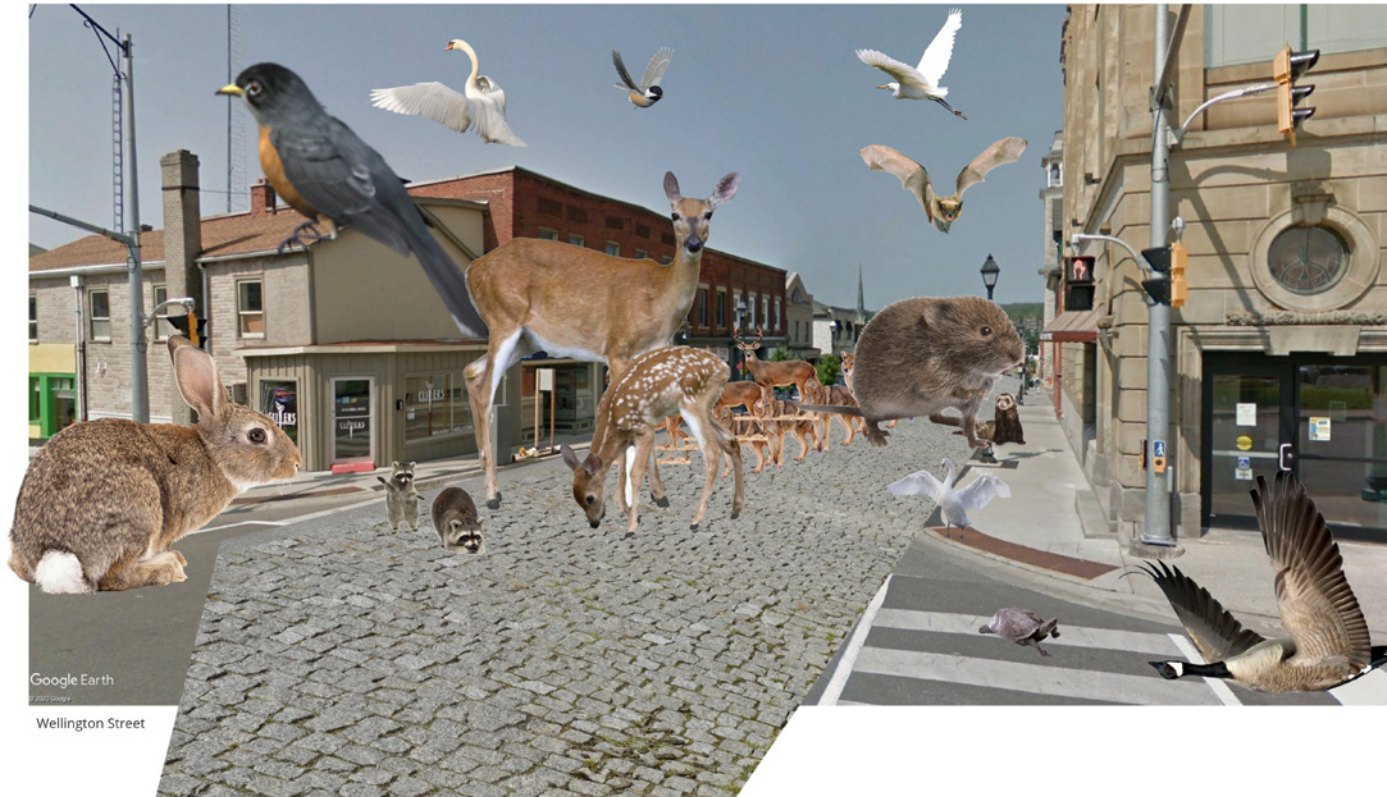
DT Kitchener has got condos - city put a moratorium on development charges - so building is happening quickly - but not enough parks! We need to keep DT dense.

Vicious cycle - people find urban centers too crowded and not natural enough, so they move out - they create suburbs and this uses more land and separates more people from each other and from the land.

We need to bring life to DT - build habitat for all life forms. Origins of urban sprawl are tied to colonization. We have to keep drawing new lots for settlers to appropriate land - "invasion and settling" - to expand cities - we need to talk about how we can use less space so we can give *land back*.

We have to change drastically - Climate Change is so much bigger than humanity.

Reimagined



Would love to see the ION – and markets, solar panels, lots of people walking – making space for Indigenous ceremony – Biophilia is very important in design, more fresh air, more plants and wildlife in cities make them feel more like a humane place to live in.

We need more vegetation – how about green spaces on the roof? The problem with trees on the boulevard is that they block the sun for the businesses and shops so the people driving by can't see in the windows. Who has the power to create green spaces? – and who is it accessible to?

We need more people living downtown – not just to work – but to live – we need to make that transition.

We need to activate and energize places for humans and others.

Original



Wellington Street

NORTH DUMFRIES

Original



Ayr

Reimagined



Residential Ayr

free transit!!!

long distance
bie routes

Community
Garden

bike share/rentals

Notes from the group

"Agree to live as peaceful neighbours"

More renewable energy, more greenery; a sacred fire, bicyclists, gardens, etc. Talked briefly about the increasing population, the worries around that.

What could happen right now, without too many obstacles?

Gardens, solar panels
We would love to redirect resources from fossil fuels and military to gardens and solar panels :)

WELLESLEY



Nafziger Road - Reimagined

Reimagined



In this image we brought life back into the downtown core of Wellesley

market along with local wildlife now able to better enjoy these spaces.

A green roof on the local community centre provides further space for pollinators and city greening efforts, as does a connecting 'green bridge' corridor above a local waterway.

A composter and rain barrel symbolize the need to consider full cycles and waste disposal, as well as the conserving of natural resources (water)

Meanwhile, the electric bus and electric vehicle symbolize this growing electrification of transit, while still keeping Wellesley connected. The horse and buggy showcases that other forms of sustainable transit that are still typical of the region are also still in use, and that sustainable does not need to always mean 'new' (as the bicycles also demonstrate)

Aligned with this is the re-Indigenization of spaces in Wellesley, giving space back to the original First Peoples who have long been stewards of this land.

The urban gardening showcases an effort to bring sustainable small-scale agriculture into towns and cities, which also bring people together and reconnect people with the land.

Adding to this community spirit of revitalization are musicians at the back, playing harp and guitar, as well as public spaces for gathering and play – including a playground and picnic table.

Lastly, the sustainability transformation in Wellesley clearly also requires adoption of clean energy, seen by the solar panels powering buildings and the local street lights, along with a wind turbine – all giving Wellesley clean energy independence. A local resident of the township can be seen repairing a wind turbine blade in the bottom left, as a reminder of the benefits of job creation and opportunities also brought by clean energy.

Notes from the group

For this image, we wanted to centre increasing diversity in farming culture and practices, including who is seen farming the land. Indigenous and BIPOC communities have historically been dispossessed from land ownership and hence farming opportunities throughout southern Ontario and beyond – hence, we saw this as an opportunity to begin to heal some of those broken relationships, providing ‘land back.’ This is also a form of honouring the Two Row Wampum, the sacred fire, four medicines (sage, sweetgrass, cedar, tobacco), and four directions that are part of the original teachings of the First Peoples on these lands.

The balancing with a Mennonite horse & buggy along with a settler cowboy looking up illustrates a balance and mutual respect that has been achieved, finally honouring the original treaties between settlers and Indigenous peoples on these lands. Other sustainability practices include a bus stop on the road bringing in access to sustainable public transit even within rural communities, along with the use of cycling which is already common in some of these communities today.

Trees planted alongside the gravel roadways provide habitat, shade and wind-breaks, along with medicines. Pollinators are supported through this added plant foliage, and practices such as beekeeping. Local habitats and ecosystems along the Grand River are well-supported, hence allowing for the resurgence of other native species including bats and wolves. These waters, now clean, can be traversed sustainably by canoe once again.

Original



Manser Road

Reimagined



WILMOT

Original



Sandhills Road

Reimagined



Original



Peel St, New Hamburg

Reimagined



Notes from the group

- Mainly agricultural land
- Initiative "Let's Tree Wilmont"
- Need tree canopies
- Windbreaks and runoffs
- Need money for farmers to grow trees
- Need bike lanes and trails
- Shoulders of roads
- Most people don't feel safe walking or riding their bikes with no sidewalk/bike lanes
- People were concerned about parking cars when bike lanes were introduced

- Need more transit that connects to Kitchener
- Necessities are far away. Services, including healthcare should be available locally so people don't always have to drive to Kitchener
- Takes long to get groceries by bike/bus
- In summer, should be able to get access to produce nearby
- Lots of locally owned businesses
- People like the small town character and charm
- Do not want drastic changes
- Should have more people in the downtown area
- Densification so services can be localized

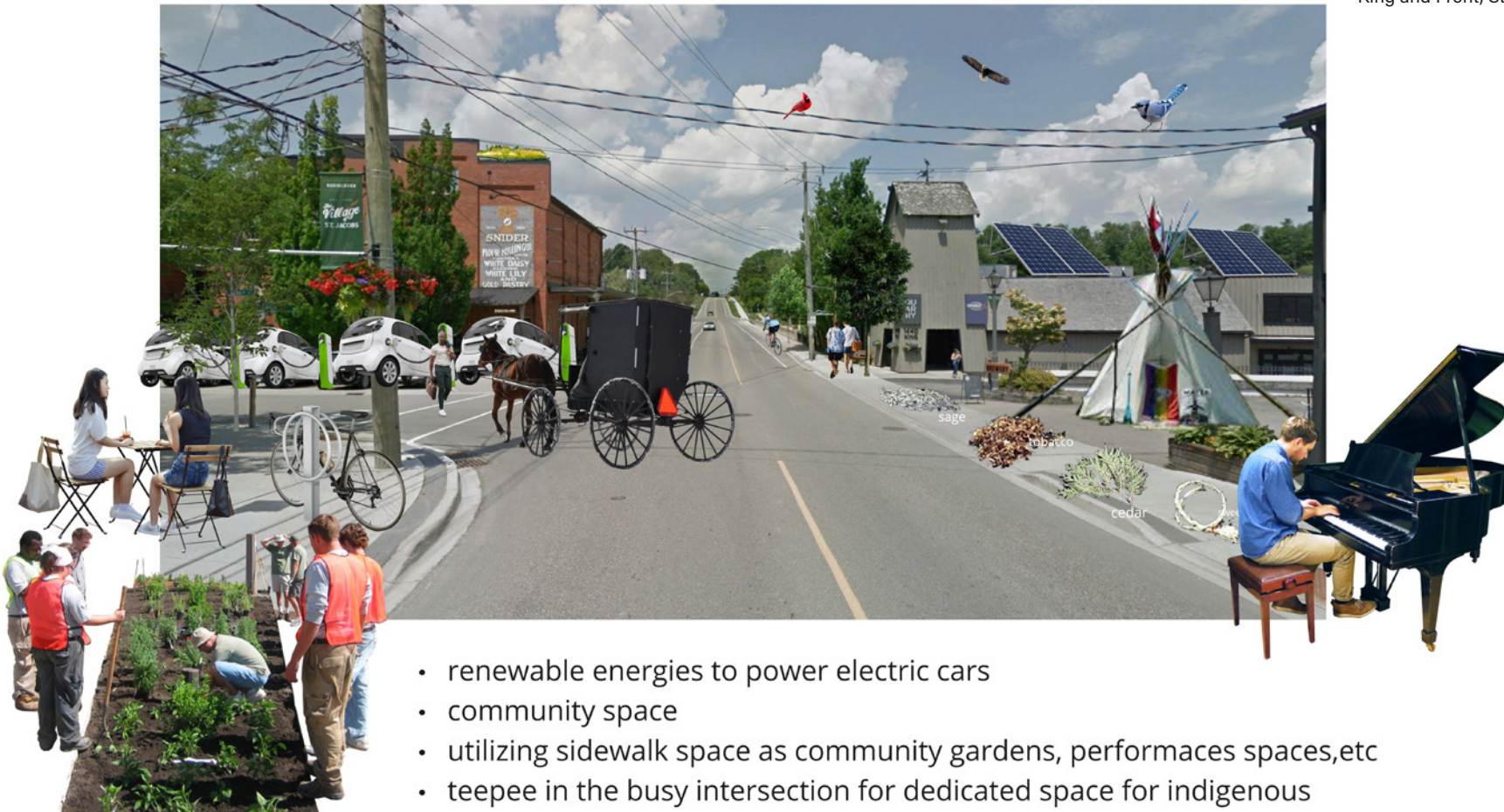
WOOLWICH

Reimagined
community space

Original



King and Front, St. Jacobs



- renewable energies to power electric cars
- community space
- utilizing sidewalk space as community gardens, performances spaces, etc
- teepee in the busy intersection for dedicated space for indigenous
- solar panels/green roofs for promoting renewable energies/sustainable tech
- electric car charging stations

Reimagined



Original



Peel Street

Notes from the group

On Peel St, Woolwich there is a gravel pit. The developers want to go below the water level, which is very problematic. This is quite close to the Grand River.

This would also be close to the path of the Indigenous Water Walkers.

There are bald eagles nesting around there currently.

There are Heron nests around St Jacob's, surprisingly close to the road!

Renewable energy infrastructure

Thank you to everyone who participated, worked on and supported this event.

From the many vibrant conversations and collages that came out of the workshop, it is clear that the spirit to transform Waterloo Region to a more just, green community is strong and there are many ways to get there. It is clear that to reach the critical emissions reduction target of 50% reduction by 2030 in line with climate science will take significant engagement and reimagining, centering community well-being and justice. Given the stakes, we refuse to believe that significant change isn't possible - instead we know that where there's a will, there's most certainly a way.

We are grateful to all who are leading the way. Reach out to get involved in the journey!

www.50by30wr.ca

[🐦 @50x30WR](https://twitter.com/50x30WR)



BRIDGE