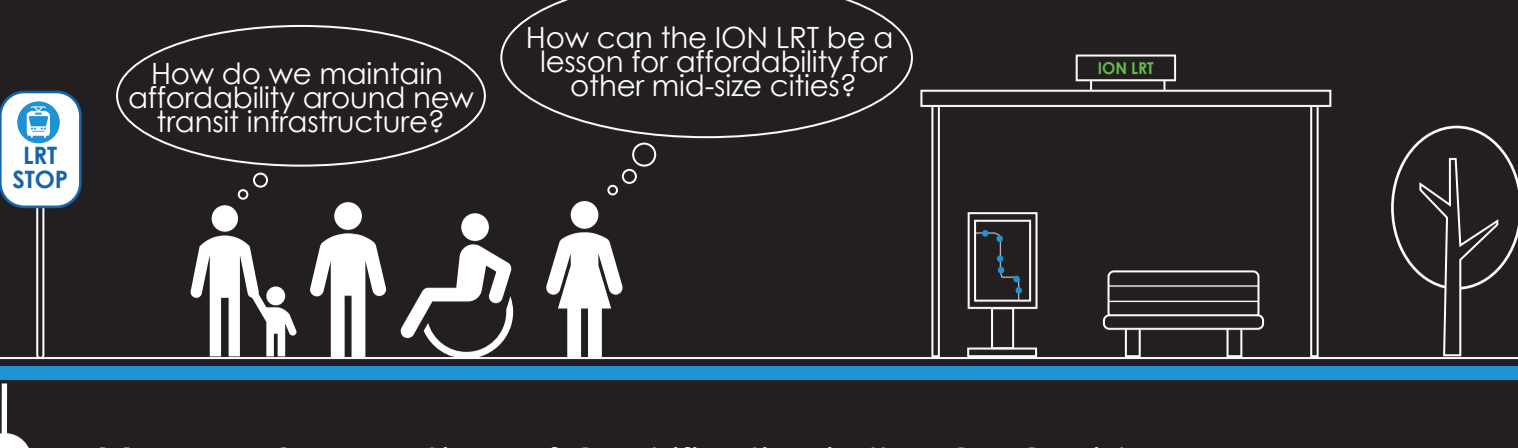


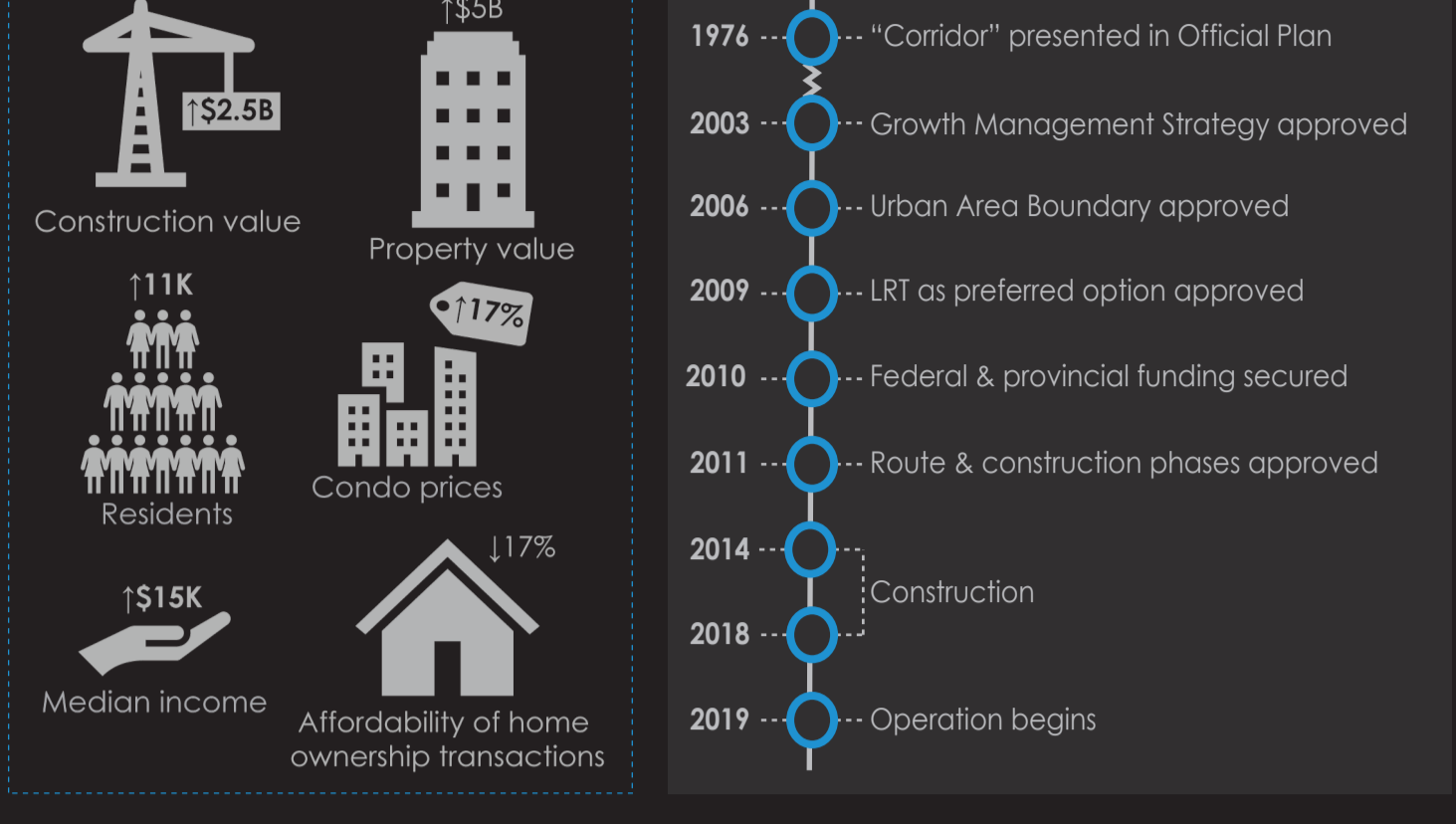
# Transit-induced gentrification in Kitchener-Waterloo:

Mapping Feedbacks between Economic Development & Community Displacement

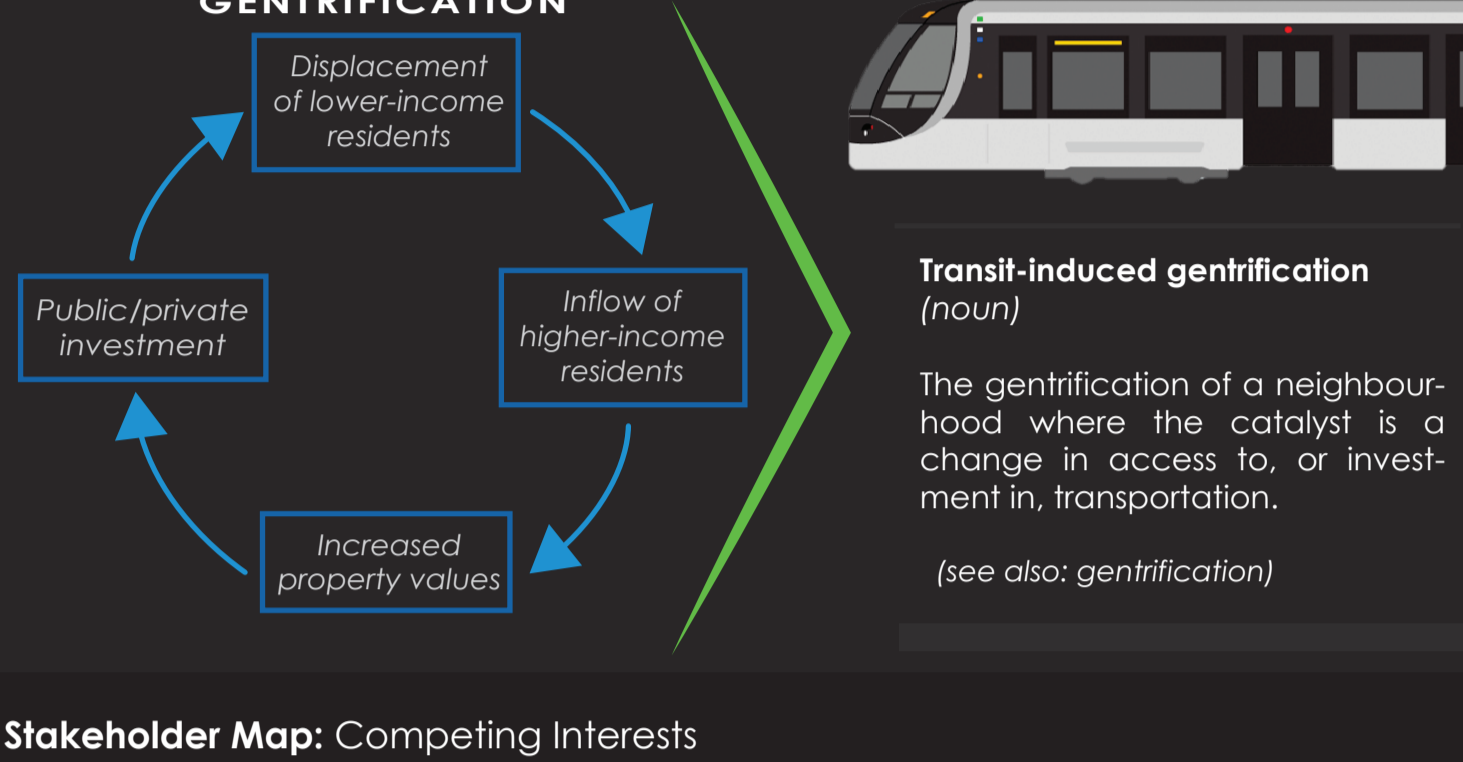


## Problem Landscape: Signs of Gentrification in the ION Corridor

The Region of Waterloo approved the ION light rail transit (LRT) project in 2011, with the main goals of improving transit access and reducing sprawl by encouraging compact development along the central transit corridor (CTC). Since its approval, the CTC has changed drastically, both physically – with new development, particularly in the form of residential towers – and socially – as more affluent residents are moving into core neighbourhoods in the CTC. These changes are putting pressure on existing residents and business owners, and as a result, the ION corridor is undergoing gentrification – the process of neighbourhood socioeconomic transformation from low-income to high-income.

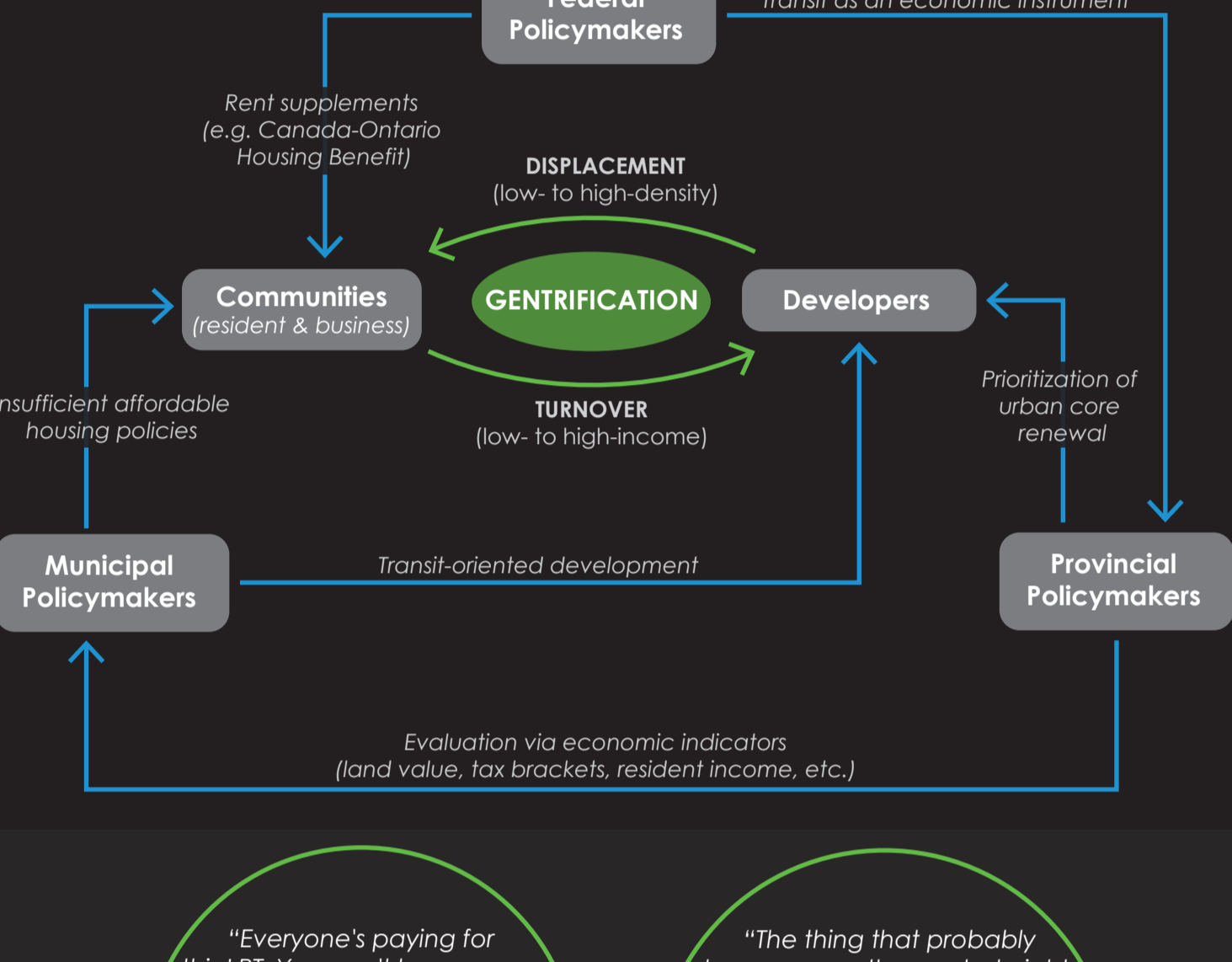


## GENTRIFICATION



## Stakeholder Map: Competing Interests

The complexity of the issue of transit-induced gentrification in Kitchener-Waterloo lies in the number of actors involved and their ranging interests. Before developing solutions, we must understand who these stakeholders are and how they interact with each other.

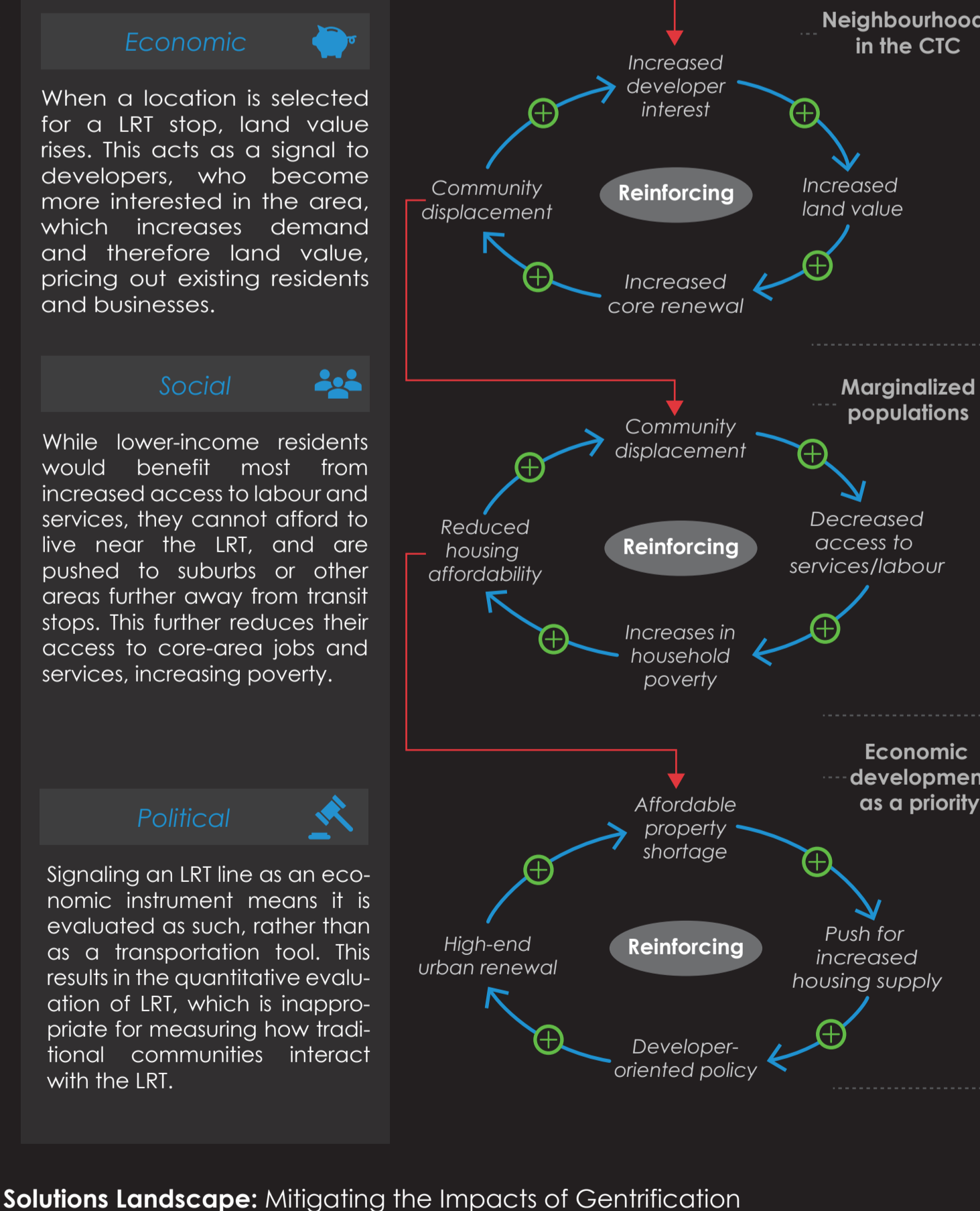


### WHAT ARE STAKEHOLDERS SAYING?

- "Everyone's paying for this LRT. You can't have everyone in the Region being able to walk to a stop to use it, but you can increase the diversity of people that benefit from it by ensuring there's a mix of housing along that corridor." -Professor (from Thompson, 2018)
- "The thing that probably keeps me up the most at night, which is the situation ... of our homeless and those ... with mental health and addiction issues ... How do ... we tackle that ... in a real and meaningful way? Because I do believe that ... we can do better, but we have to do better." -Mayor of Kitchener
- "They're building these condos everywhere and they're mowing down places that used to be rooming houses." -Homeless resident
- "We really need ... to compete on the global stage." -Mayor of Waterloo
- "The [commercial rent] rates have gone up because more people want to be in the area and that drives more residential production, which increases the demand for goods and services, so those get built." -Chair, UpTown Waterloo BIA (Jackson, 2018)
- "We've had numerous units sell within a day or two, and multiple offers — sometimes before they even hit the market. There's such demand that people are willing to step up and pay full price before it hits the market." -Realtor (Thompson, 2018)

## Feedback Loops: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?

An imbalance emerges when examining the interests and actions of the stakeholders involved. In this case, economic and political interests have overshadowed social equity, resulting in increased displacement in the ION corridor.



## Solutions Landscape: Mitigating the Impacts of Gentrification

There is no singular intervention that can "solve" gentrification. Further, in the context of Kitchener-Waterloo, interventions must be "solve" in nature, as the system has already been implemented, and people and businesses have already been displaced. We hope that other mid-size cities considering LRT take the lessons learned from this exercise and can implement proactive measures to reduce rates of displacement in their transit corridors.

Developer Incentives	Social Outreach	Prospective Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-zone transit corridor to allow for higher-density.</li> <li>Create incentives/policies for affordable units.</li> <li>Enact affordable unit "replacement" incentives/policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate collaboration between community partners and funding sources.</li> <li>Improve community consultation among marginalized groups.</li> <li>Leverage partnerships with community organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore rental relief &amp; rent cap policies.</li> <li>Ensure LRT line connects low- and high-income neighbourhoods.</li> <li>Explore alternative land-use designations and associated tax breaks.</li> </ul>

## Gaps & Levers of Change

SOLUTIONS	GAPS	LEVERS
	Lack of resources for transit-stop communities	Policy to help residents leverage existing resources to remain in a neighbourhood
	Lack of policy to protect communities	Align housing interventions with project goals
	Paradoxical priorities for LRT implementation	Incorporate qualitative research into LRT evaluation to inform holistic interventions