



Region of Waterloo

REGION OF WATERLOO  
**Strategic  
Focus** 2019-2023



## Message from the Regional Chair



During every new term of Regional Council, the Region embarks on a strategic planning process to help set priorities for the organization. I am pleased to present the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Each member of Regional Council has been involved in creating this plan, which will guide us as we work together to improve the quality of life for residents in Waterloo region.

As a resident of this community, your input is highly valued. I would like to thank all of you that contributed to the plan this past year as you have provided a wealth of information that helped guide the Region's priorities. I would also encourage you to stay in touch and follow the Region's progress on our Strategic Plan priorities.

**This Strategic Plan builds on our foundations to achieve our vision of:**

**An inclusive, thriving and sustainable region of connected rural and urban communities with global reach, fostering opportunities for current and future generations.**

To ensure we achieve this vision, we must continue to build on our strengths, stay mindful of our challenges and continue the work already begun to ensure Waterloo Region remains a great place to live, work and play for everyone.

Karen Redman, *Regional Chair*

Regional Council is elected by the residents of Waterloo region to establish policies, priorities and oversee the many services provided by the Region of Waterloo. Regional Council is the policy-forming and decision-making body of regional government.

### Regional Council is comprised of:

- Sixteen Councillors of which eight are directly elected at large from the urban municipalities as follows: Cambridge (2); Kitchener (4); and Waterloo (2).
- 7 area municipality mayors automatically sit on Regional Council, as elected from within their municipality.
- The head of Regional Council is the Regional Chair who is elected at-large across the entire region.



### Regional Councillors:

Karen Redman, *Regional Chair*  
 Sue Foxton, *North Dumfries Township, Mayor*  
 Sandy Shantz, *Woolwich Township, Mayor*  
 Les Armstrong, *Wilmot Township, Mayor*  
 Joe Nowak, *Wellesley Township, Mayor*  
 Kathryn McGarry, *City of Cambridge, Mayor*  
 Karl Kiefer, *Cambridge*  
 Helen Jowett, *Cambridge*  
 Berry Vrbancovic, *City of Kitchener, Mayor*  
 Tom Galloway, *Kitchener*  
 Geoff Lorentz, *Kitchener*  
 Michael Harris, *Kitchener*  
 Elizabeth Clarke, *Kitchener*  
 Dave Jaworsky, *City of Waterloo, Mayor*  
 Jim Erb, *Waterloo*  
 Sean Strickland, *Waterloo*



## Waterloo Region community at a glance:

Waterloo Region includes the three cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, and the four townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich, providing a unique blend of urban and rural centres.



Comprised of **seven area municipalities**.



Waterloo Region's 2018 **total population** (including students) was **601,220**.



Region's population has grown on average **1.2%** each year or **7,700 people** per year over the past five years.



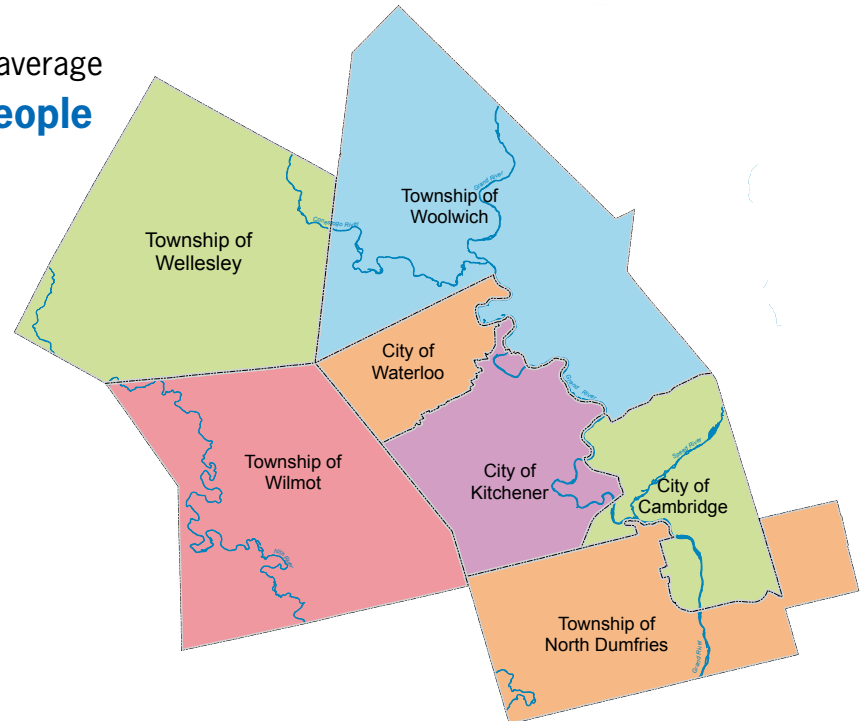
**Median age** of Waterloo region's population is **37.7 years**. The Ontario average is 40.4 years.



**88%** of residents **live in cities**.



**12%** of residents **live in townships**.





## What is a general picture of Waterloo Region?

In 2016, **15%** of Regional residents were **over** age **65**



By 2041, **25%** of Regional residents will be **over** age **65**

Has **lower rates** of **high school graduation**, fewer people with a **university degree** than Ontario and Canada



Is a place where people **work long hours** and have a **high level of work stress**, but also have **flexible work arrangements** and **shorter commutes**



**11.5%** of people in Waterloo Region **live below the low income measure (LIM)**, compared to 14.3% in Ontario



**Growing faster** than other parts of Ontario



In 2016, **1 in 8** residents spoke a language other than English regularly at home with Mandarin replacing German as the most common.

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Over the last 10 years, average **rents** for 1 and 2 bedroom units have **increased twice as fast** as inflation, (37% compared to 17% for inflation).



Over **14,000 recent immigrants** have arrived in Waterloo Region in the **last 5 years**



Has **high rates of employment**

A **high percentage** of young **children** rated as **vulnerable** in their early development.



**Single parent families** are **increasing faster** than couples with children. A **9.5%** increase since 2011



The youth **unemployment rate** remains **higher** than the unemployment rate of the overall working age population.



Has a **younger** population compared to Ontario





## Region of Waterloo – the organization's programs and services

### **There are two levels of municipal government in Waterloo Region:**

1. Regional level of government – Regional Municipality of Waterloo (Region of Waterloo).
2. Local area levels of government for the City of Cambridge, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.

The Region of Waterloo and the local area municipalities (cities and townships) are responsible for different services. The Region of Waterloo is responsible for providing approximately 60 per cent of municipal government services in this community and provides a range of services through six departments and a Chief Administrator's Office.

Directly and indirectly the Region is also involved with community partners in economic development, community wellbeing and crime prevention, heritage preservation and funding for the arts. The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) is responsible for providing policing services to the citizens of Waterloo Region. WRPS is funded by the Region of Waterloo but governance of the WRPS is the responsibility of the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board, whose members are appointed by Regional Council and the Province of Ontario.

For more information on Regional services contact the Regions' Service First Call Centre at 519-575-4400 or visit our website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca).





## About the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Plan

The Region of Waterloo engages in a strategic planning process for each term of Council. The Strategic Plan describes a future view of what the Region of Waterloo is working to achieve. It provides a common focus for Council and staff over the next several years. It helps to guide priority setting and ensures that our programs and services address the changing needs of our community.

The Strategic plan is not intended to be an inclusive list of everything the Region does in the community. Rather, it identifies new or ongoing initiatives that the organization needs to focus on in order to ensure it is responding to the priorities identified by the community throughout the strategic planning process. Supporting the Strategic Plan are Department and service plans for the many programs and services the Region provides.

### How the plan was developed

To make sure that the Strategic Plan reflects the most pressing needs of the community four main components were implemented:





## How was the community engaged?

The Region's Strategic planning process provided opportunities for community members, partner organizations and customers of Regional services to have a "Strat Chat" on the key issues and priorities that matter most to the community.

Conversations took place through a community wide survey, focus groups, online and paper surveys, community meetings and through an online discussion forum. The Region also engaged staff to help identify actions that would have the most benefit and impact on community priorities and needs. The Region was able to connect with residents from diverse backgrounds and sectors while informing and educating participants on Regional programs and services. Over 12,000 members of the public participated in the process (see Figure 1) and provided detailed information about key issues facing the community.

A community-wide resident survey was conducted in partnership with sixteen partner organizations including: the seven area municipalities, Waterloo Regional Police Service, Waterloo-Wellington Local



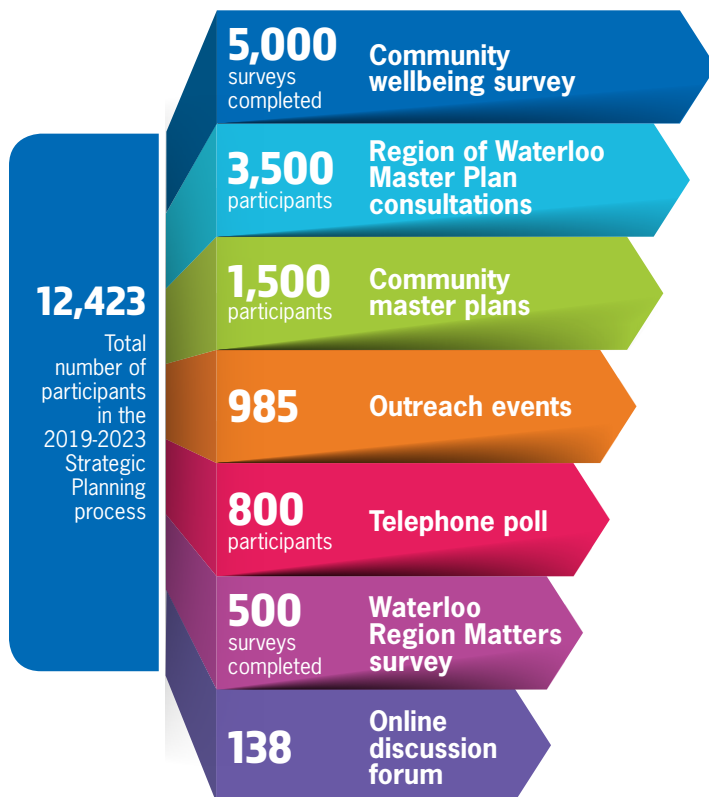
Health Integration Network, the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, United Way Waterloo Region Communities, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Woolwich Community Health Center, Lang's, and Kitchener Downtown Community Health Center. The survey was conducted by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) through the University of Waterloo, and gathered residents' perceptions on a variety of aspects critical to overall wellbeing including: community vitality, healthy populations, democratic engagement, the environment, leisure and culture, education, living standards, and time use.

Over 5,000 residents participated in the survey, which was weighted to ensure a representative sample of Waterloo Region across demographics, municipality, gender and age. The results of the survey serve as an "oil light" indicating where attention is needed. An overview of the survey results was presented to Council at a Strategic Planning workshop in February, 2019.

Reports related to the public input collected throughout the strategic planning process can be found on the Region's website under the "strategic planning" menu.



## Public participation (Figure 1)



**Overall, 75%**  
of residents report that  
they are **very satisfied**  
with life in general.

## What did we hear?

The public provided a wealth of information to inform the development of the Strategic Plan. When talking about life in Waterloo Region, overall the results paint a picture of an engaged, diverse and complex community. Most residents believe they have a good quality of life, feel safe and have confidence in local institutions. Residents indicate they are actively engaged with one another through volunteering and participation in community events. In addition, they indicated that the most appealing aspect of Waterloo Region is that it offers plenty of amenities yet maintains a small-town feel.

According to the survey conducted by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), while many people enjoy life and lead fulfilling lives, there are a number of indicators that suggest that work is becoming more complex, is more demanding, and consumes a disproportionate amount of our collective time and energy. The pace of life seems to be taking its toll. Feelings of isolation and exclusion are very real and the experience of isolation seems to be on the rise. Substance use, mental health and financial challenges and concerns are touching the lives of many.

Some highlights from the public input and the CIW survey (2019) will be presented in each of the focus areas under the heading of “what did we hear?”



## Strategic Plan framework

The framework for the Region's Strategic Plan includes our vision, mission, and values as well as the strategic focus areas, objectives, measures and actions. In addition, strategic imperatives have been added to the plan as recommended by the community.

### Our vision (What we aspire to)

**Waterloo Region:** an inclusive, thriving and sustainable region of connected rural and urban communities with global reach, fostering opportunities for current and future generations.

### Our mission (What we do)



#### **We serve**

with caring and responsible public service.



#### **We engage**

by listening and responding to community needs.



#### **We inspire**

by conducting ourselves with openness to enhance public trust and confidence.



### Our values (How we work)

**Service:** Satisfy and build confidence.

**Integrity:** Instill trust.

**Respect:** Value and recognize.

**Innovation:** Make ideas happen.

**Collaboration:** Involve and engage others.



## **Our strategic imperatives** (considerations when implementing actions):

Strategic imperatives are system level considerations to apply to the work we do over the strategic planning cycle. The imperatives have been informed by public input and are cross-functional in nature. The intention of applying the strategic imperatives in our work is to ensure that we support other focus areas and actions.

Five strategic imperatives will be used as a lens on actions as we implement the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan:

- **Balance of rural and urban communities** – recognize the uniqueness, opportunities and needs of our rural and urban communities.
- **Partnerships** – foster trusting relationships with people and groups to provide effective and excellent responses to community priorities.
- **Equity** – pay attention to equity and deliver services that achieve equitable outcomes for marginalized groups in order to produce transformational results.
- **Climate action** – build corporate and community understanding of the climate crisis with a focus on individual and collective responsibility and action. Include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing climate resiliency as key considerations in Regional decision making.
- **Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money** – provide the most financially sustainable decisions and solutions that provide value for taxpayer dollars.





## Our focus areas

(Our priority areas of focus):

Five focus areas have been developed for the 2019 – 2023 term of Council. These five focus areas are highly interconnected and therefore the success of one focus area will be dependent on the progress of the others. The Region's vision will only be achieved through the coordination and integration of objectives and actions associated with the various focus areas.



**Thriving economy**



**Sustainable transportation**



**Environment and climate action**



**Healthy, safe and inclusive communities**



**Responsive and engaging public service**



## **Our strategic objectives** (What we are trying to accomplish):

For each focus area, strategic objectives have been identified in order to add clarity to the focus areas, describe the overall intent and direction of the focus areas, and help staff align their work to the focus areas. The strategic objectives define “what” the Region is trying to accomplish in that area of focus.

## **Our actions** (How we will achieve the strategic objectives):

Specific actions have been developed, which identify “how” the Region will achieve the strategic objectives. It is important to note that these actions are not intended to be an inclusive list of everything the Region does in the community. Rather, the actions identify new or ongoing initiatives that the organization needs to focus on in order to ensure it is responding to the priorities identified by Council and the community throughout the strategic planning process.



## Our strategic measures (How we will assess progress):

Meaningful strategic measures have been developed in order to measure progress towards the strategic objectives. These measures profile two levels of measurement, which include:

- 1. Key Performance Indicators (KPI):** establish a benchmark of performance, identify evidence of the intended results and create a means of monitoring progress towards the intended strategic objectives. These measures are directly impacted by the Region's efforts and will be reported to Council and the public on an annual basis.
- 2. Community indicators:** are broad community measures that track the trends and/or issues happening in the community over the Strategic Planning life cycle. The community measures serve as an oil light, with the understanding that we hope to contribute towards them but the Region does not directly control the outcome.



## Sustainable Development Goals

World leaders from Canada and 192 other United Nations member states adopted “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Agenda is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity and has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to demonstrate the scale and ambition of this universal agenda. The SDGs are global in nature and can be applied to the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan throughout the five focus areas. The Region’s Strategic Plan addresses all 17 SDGs. To identify where the Region is aligned with the SDGs look for the SDG icons in each focus area.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS







### Thriving economy

#### What did we hear?

People like living in Waterloo Region. They believe they live in a thriving community, which has a small town feel with big city advantages. The location of Waterloo Region and the blend of rural and urban areas and even the Region's geographical location in relation to other city centres received positive praise.

Priorities identified include:

- Residents see arts, culture and heritage as important aspects of the community.
- The need for a shared vision for our economic prosperity that is locally rooted, internationally competitive and globally recognized.
- Plan for and provide the services and infrastructure necessary to attract immigrants and keep young talent, new employers and investments were seen as the foundation for innovation and economic success.
- Increase passenger air service to meet the travel needs of our growing community as well as attract talent and business.

#### What we will do

The Region will lead strategic economic development initiatives, and will support the work of the Waterloo Economic Development Corporation and other community stakeholders to achieve a shared vision for our economic prosperity that is locally rooted, internationally competitive and globally recognized. The Region will help to plan for and provide the infrastructure and services necessary to attract talent and investment and create the foundation for innovation and economic success.



More than **20%** of people are working two or more jobs



Almost **9%** of people struggle to pay bills on time

Strategic objectives	Actions
<p><b>1.1</b> Create a competitive business-supportive community to help attract, retain and grow employers, talent and investments in Waterloo Region.</p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Identify and implement specific economic cluster development initiatives in collaboration with Waterloo Economic Development Corporation, local municipalities, senior levels of government, private, research and industry associations.</p>
	<p><b>1.1.2</b> Complete a review of policies, procedures and communications in partnership with area municipalities and private sector stakeholders to ensure a business friendly environment and support for local companies (e.g. business inquiries, policy and permit approvals, etc.).</p>
	<p><b>1.1.3</b> Develop a broader Smart Waterloo Region strategy and implementation plan in partnership with area municipalities and the technology sector.</p>
	<p><b>1.1.4</b> Support the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership to engage, educate and support employers to recruit, hire and retain immigrant and refugee talent.</p>
	<p><b>1.1.5</b> In collaboration with community partners, support the development of a talent attraction and retention strategy for Waterloo Region.</p>
	<p><b>1.1.6</b> Leverage our proactive Climate Action initiatives such as LRT, transit, active transportation to attract investment and enhance talent recruitment.</p>
<p><b>1.2</b> Ensure an adequate and strategic supply of employment lands in the Region.</p>	<p><b>1.2.1</b> Work with community partners to develop an employment land strategy, framework, and land supply that facilitates employment retention and growth.</p>

Strategic objectives	Actions
1.3 Support the arts, culture and heritage sectors to enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to Waterloo Region.	1.3.1 Work with community partners to develop a regional culture plan that complements area municipal plans and that defines and reinforces the Regional cultural mandate.
	1.3.2 Develop a robust, transparent and equitable grant funding strategy to support the arts and culture sector.
	1.3.3 Provide opportunities for cultural activities and events to take place at Regional facilities on Regional property.
1.4 Grow passenger air service and aviation related activities at the Region of Waterloo International Airport.	1.4.1 Implement the Airport Master Plan to plan for and accommodate future development at the Airport.
	1.4.2 Continue targeted outreach and marketing to airlines based on top routes for leisure and business travel.
	1.4.3 Continue outreach to aviation related companies looking to relocate to land on or adjacent to the airport.



## Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

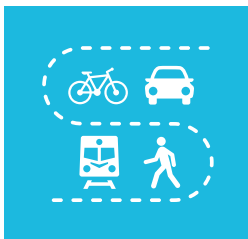


**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





**78.1%** of survey respondents use a **personal car** as their **main type of transportation** used to get around the community. Just over **11%** of survey respondents **walk or cycle** as their main type of transportation.



People in Waterloo Region spend an average of about **40 minutes** each day **commuting to and from work**.

## Sustainable transportation

### What did we hear?

The physical infrastructure, the ease of getting around the community and providing options for active and safe transportation were cited as critically important to the community. Proper maintenance and management for planned growth, increased congestion on the roads and the future of sustainable transportation were noted as concerns.

Priorities identified include:

- Improve traffic flow and better integration of roads.
- Improve intercity transportation.
- Improve access to public transportation.
- Make transit more affordable and appealing to the public.
- Enhance active forms of transportation such as walking, cycling and transit.
- Improve infrastructure and awareness so people can travel safely on all modes of transportation throughout the Region.

### What we will do

The Region will offer more travel choices to residents, and strive to ensure that our transportation system is affordable and environmentally sustainable. The transportation network will be integrated and accessible and will contribute positively to urban intensification and economic prosperity. The Region will encourage more active transportation by enhancing facilities that make it safe, more comfortable and convenient to walk and cycle in our community. The Region recognizes that improving public transportation can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by moving more people with fewer vehicles, and aims to minimize GHG emissions by using efficient vehicles, alternative fuels, and decreasing the impact of operations.

Strategic objectives	Actions
2.1 Enhance the transit system to increase ridership and ensure it is accessible and appealing to the public.	2.1.1 Review and implement the GRT Business Plan to increase ridership and enhance rider experience.
	2.1.2 Continue to evaluate and monitor alternative transit fare structures.
	2.1.3 Complete detailed planning for Stage 2 ION to Cambridge.
2.2 Improve and better integrate roads and rail transportation services to and from Waterloo Region.	2.2.1 Work with community partners to advocate for improved train service between Waterloo Region and the GTA.
	2.2.2 Complete the feasibility study for GO train service to Cambridge via the Fergus subdivision.
	2.2.3 Design and build the transit infrastructure for the King-Victoria Transit Hub as the first phase of integrated development on the site.
2.3 Increase participation in active forms of transportation (cycling and walking).	2.3.1 Continue to explore, plan and implement new pedestrian and cycling facilities in coordination with local municipalities as per the Transportation Master Plan to provide good connectivity and close gaps in the current active transportation network.
	2.3.2 Incorporate more cycling and pedestrian amenities (e.g. streetscaping features, street furniture, bicycle repair stands, etc.) into roadway designs to increase the attractiveness of active modes of transportation.
	2.3.3 Increase usage of cycling facilities by enhancing maintenance levels.
	2.3.4 Develop planning policies that encourage more compact, walkable, transit oriented communities in both the built up and greenfield areas of the Region.

Strategic objectives	Actions
2.4 Improve road safety for all users - drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, horse and buggies.	<p>2.4.1 Continue to implement the Region's road safety program to reduce the number of severe and fatal injury collisions, using elements of engineering, education and enforcement, with a greater emphasis on reducing collisions involving active transportation users.</p> <p>2.4.2 Advocate with other levels of government to change legislation and regulations to improve road safety for all users.</p>



## Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)







Almost **90%** of people feel a personal **responsibility** to help **protect the environment**.

However, this does not always seem to translate into behaviour change.



## Environment and climate action

### What did we hear?

The environment is very important to residents living in Waterloo Region. They understand the impact that growth and other factors have on the environment and recognize that a healthy natural environment is essential to wellbeing.

Priorities identified include:

- Improve our air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Work collaboratively across all sectors to protect and enhance the environment.
- Restore and preserve green space, agricultural land and sensitive environmental areas.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle including a ban on plastics
- Increase capacity for storm water management
- Support and use renewable and alternative energy whenever possible.
- Take action on climate change
- Have clear flooding plans and encourage people to take part in emergency planning.

### What we will do

The Region aims to be one of the most environmentally sustainable regions in the country, and will play a key role in managing urban and agricultural land use, protecting and enhancing the natural environment including our air, water and land as well as protecting green spaces and sensitive environmental features. The Region will work in partnership with the community and area municipalities to reduce our GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions through conservation, efficiencies and innovative actions as well as preparing for the effects of climate change.



Strategic objectives	Actions
3.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	3.1.1 Reduce the production of organization's (Region of Waterloo) Green House Gas emissions e.g., waste, water, facilities, fleet.
	3.1.2 Support the work of ClimateActionWR in the development of a Climate Action Plan to reach an 80% reduction of 2010 emission levels by 2050.
	3.1.3 Develop a public education campaign to highlight the GHG emissions reduced through investments in transit, active transportation, sustainable transportation, the green bin program, and energy efficiency etc.
	3.1.4 Create a Climate Action Working Group of staff and Council Members to oversee the advancement of climate action initiatives.
3.2 Improve resilience to climate change and/or severe weather.	3.2.1 Implement the Community Climate Adaptation plan to mitigate the impacts of climate change on regional infrastructure and operations.
	3.2.2 Provide adaptation awareness, resources and support to businesses and organizations to enable them to develop their own climate adaptation plans.
	3.2.3 Develop a Climate Change & Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment to review local climate projections, current and projected health risks and identify adaptive measures to strengthen resilience to the health impacts of climate change.
	3.2.4 Increase the number of registrants for the Alert Waterloo Region emergency notification system by encouraging citizens to sign up to receive emergency messaging through different communication methods.

Strategic objectives	Actions
3.3 Direct more waste away from the landfill, improve recycling and better manage organic waste.	3.3.1 Preparation for transition of the Blue Box Program to full producer responsibility to ensure seamless and smooth transition to the new Provincial regulatory framework.
	3.3.2 Reduce the current garbage bag/ container limit from 4 to 3 bags/containers.
	3.3.3 Research opportunities and barriers to implementing green bin use in multi residential complexes (including Waterloo Region housing properties).
3.4 Protect our water resources (drinking water and wastewater treatment).	3.4.1 Proactively manage the water and wastewater system to protect public health and the environment.
	3.4.2 Continue with Rural Water Quality Program.
	3.4.3 Optimize the water supply and distribution system to meet the Region's long term drinking water needs
3.5 Promote the efficient use of urban land, and protect and enhance agricultural and natural areas.	3.5.1 Proactively manage the water and wastewater system to protect public health and the environment.
	3.5.2 Seek opportunities with community partners to increase the Region's Natural Areas.
	3.5.3 Create a Waterloo Agricultural Industry Strategy to support the agriculture, agribusiness and agri-food sector.



## Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)





Nearly **40%** of local residents have experienced **negative impacts** related to **mental health issues** in their family this year.



Survey respondents experienced **negative impacts** in the past 12 months due to **substance use issues**.

**6.4%** - their own  
**14.5%** - family  
**17.3%** - someone else's

## Healthy, safe and inclusive communities

### What did we hear?

Fostering healthy, safe, inclusive and connected communities is very important to residents. Environmental and social conditions such as addictions and inclusion were cited as having a great impact on the health and safety of our community.

Priorities identified include:

- Create more and better affordable housing.
- Enhance community wellbeing and crime prevention.
- Plan and support programs that enable children and youth to live healthy, active lives.
- Make meaningful changes in programs, services and policies to address systemic racism and oppression.
- Prevent and reduce problematic substance use and its impacts.
- Help support people to be physically and socially active in the community.
- Increase and improve spaces where community can gather
- Develop respectful relationships with Indigenous people to foster understanding and awareness and work towards reconciliation.

### What we will do

The Region will work with the community to provide quality services and programs and equitable access to supports that contribute to a healthy, safe and inclusive community. The Region will continue efforts to improve child and youth wellbeing, population health, reduce problematic substance use and its consequences as well as enhance community safety and wellbeing. The Region will also provide leadership to improve affordable housing options.

Strategic objectives	Actions
4.1 Improve child and youth wellbeing in Waterloo Region.	4.1.1 Develop and implement a new child care and early learning service system plan with clear priorities and actions for improving inclusion, access, affordability and quality of licensed child care across Waterloo Region.
	4.1.2 Support the collective efforts of the Children and Youth Planning Table including the Smart Waterloo Region initiative for children and youth.
	4.1.3 Enhance Healthy Babies Healthy Children and vision screening reach for young children to support child development outcomes.
4.2 Make affordable housing more available to individuals and families.	4.2.1 Provide leadership and facilitation to increase the supply of affordable housing by supporting new construction and/or rent assistance.
	4.2.2 Finalize and implement the Waterloo Region Housing Master Plan.
	4.2.3 Engage community partners to identify new innovative strategies to increase the affordable housing supply.
	4.2.4 Support the enhancements of on-site housing supports for people experiencing homelessness.
4.3 Promote and enhance equity in policies, planning, services, and decision-making in order to positively impact community wellbeing.	4.3.1 Develop the capacity and systems to collect and report on demographic data to enhance equity in Region of Waterloo services to better meet the needs of our community.
	4.3.2 Work with Wellbeing Waterloo Region to develop and implement equity and bias awareness training with follow-up actions to impact and address system wide inequities.
	4.3.3 Work with the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership to ensure that the community, systems, policies and programs are welcoming and inclusive of immigrants and refugees.

Strategic objectives	Actions
	4.3.4 Enhance regional facilities and processes to facilitate welcoming and inclusive spaces e.g., art, signage, burning of traditional medicines, offering of territorial acknowledgements etc.
4.4 Prevent and reduce problematic substance use and its consequences.	4.4.1 Coordinate and facilitate a cross sectoral opioid response through the Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy (WRIDS).
	4.4.2 Implement appropriate Consumption and Treatment Services in Waterloo Region.
	4.4.3 Work with the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council to increase community engagement in upstream prevention approaches.
4.5 Enhance community safety and wellbeing in Waterloo Region.	4.5.1 Develop a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan that builds on the work of Crime Prevention Council and Wellbeing Waterloo Region.
	4.5.2 Implement leading best practices in person centered care for seniors in Sunnyside Senior's Services.
	4.5.3 Enhance Region of Waterloo staff knowledge and capacity to understand local Indigenous history and the urban Indigenous community in partnership with area municipalities.



## Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)





Residents are **more than twice as likely** to attend a community meeting, open house, demonstration or protest than they were in 2013.



**2/3** of respondents see themselves as **well-informed about politics and issues** facing the region, and **1/3** of people **feel government isn't listening to them.**

## Responsive and engaging public service

### What did we hear?

Residents expect responsive and engaging public service to meet the needs of the growing community. Informing and involving the community in decision-making was cited as key in order to inspire public trust and confidence in government.

Priorities identified include:

- Improve community awareness about the services provided by the Region.
- Engage and involve the public in decisions that impact the community.
- Bring the government into the community by using less jargon, implementing new methods for public outreach for all ages, improving social media etc..
- Improve the accessibility of Regional programs and services to support our diverse community.
- Ensure Regional programs and services are efficient and effective and are open and transparent to the public.
- Improve the provision of data
- Strengthen and enhance partnerships with area municipalities, academia, community stakeholders and other levels of government.

### What we will do

The Region will strive to inspire public trust and confidence by engaging citizens and collaborating with community partners to foster meaningful and open conversations about Regional programs and services. The Region will attract, recruit and retain a skilled, engaged and caring workforce that delivers excellent citizen-centered services to meet the diverse needs of the community. Organizational processes, facilities and resources will be reliable, cost efficient and effective, and will provide excellent value to the community.

Strategic objectives	Actions
5.1 Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Region of Waterloo initiatives.	5.1.1 Develop a digital and social media strategy to enhance online communications with the public.
	5.1.2 Optimize the Region's websites to make them more interactive, timely and relevant.
	5.1.3 Develop and implement public engagement resources and supports to increase the capacity of staff to conduct meaningful public engagement (online and in person).
5.2 Provide excellent citizen centered services that enhance service satisfaction.	5.2.1 Improve service and customer satisfaction by implementing a corporate wide Service Strategy.
	5.2.2 Improve access to and quality of Regional information and Services between Citizens and the Service First Call Centre.
	5.2.3 Improve the quality of life of Community Services Department clients through the delivery of integrated services that shift service to a more individualized and person-centered approach.
5.3 Attract, support and retain skilled, engaged and diverse employees.	5.3.1 Develop and implement an integrated Employee Engagement Strategy to attract, retain and support engaged and productive staff.
	5.3.2 Develop and implement a talent management strategy that ensures that skilled staff are hired, retained and available as vacancies occur.



Strategic objectives	Actions
5.4 Ensure the Region provides value for money and long term financial sustainability.	5.4.1 Implement the Region's Capital Asset Renewal Funding Strategy, subject to annual budget approval.
	5.4.2 Implement a sustainable, long term strategy for the funding and financing of new infrastructure required to service growth.
	5.4.3 Regularly compare the Region's property taxes, user rates and development charges with comparable municipalities to ensure the Region remains competitive.



## Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





## From planning to implementation

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for other Region of Waterloo plans and initiatives, guiding Council and staff in setting priorities and delivering programs to address the changing needs of our community. In order to continue to make the Strategic Plan meaningful and relevant during this term of Council, the following components will be implemented:

### **Departmental Strategic Plans**

In parallel with the Corporate Strategic Plan, each Department develops a Department Strategic Plan. The Department Strategic plans identify additional priority actions needed to implement the vision and corporate strategic objectives as well as more detailed departmental objectives and actions specific to Departmental priorities.

### **Alignment and linkages with other corporate and department processes and plans**

The Strategic Plan will be directly tied to the annual budget process as well as other corporate initiatives to allow for informed decision-making for resource allocation. This Strategic Plan also incorporates key elements from various Regional Master Plans (e.g. Transportation Master Plan). As Regional master plans are updated over the next few years there will be conscious alignment with the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan also provides direction for other initiatives such as communications planning and program and service changes.







## **Applying the strategic imperatives**

As we work on actions identified in the Strategic Plan we will need to consider the impact of our actions to ensure that we positively impact other focus areas in the plan. Five Strategic Imperatives will be used as a lens on actions as we implement the 2019-2023 Plan:

- 1. Climate action**
- 2. Equity**
- 3. Partnerships**
- 4. Balance of rural and urban communities**
- 5. Efficiency, effectiveness and value for money**

## **Orientation and training**

The Region of Waterloo's Strategic Plan will be a core component of staff training and ongoing development. It will also be a focus in the New Employee Orientation Program (NEOP).

## **Partnerships**

Ongoing partnerships with area municipalities, community partners and other orders of government will be key to the Region's success in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Where possible and appropriate we will strengthen internal and external relationships to achieve common goals and resolve community issues.

## **Continued community engagement**

The Region of Waterloo's 2019-2023 Strategic Planning process provides a forum where citizens can talk about what matters to them, what they like and value, what they want to improve, and

what their aspirations for the Region are as it grows over the next several years. Continuing the community engagement process will enable the Region to collectively create and implement priorities that are clear, inclusive, sustainable and supported by the community. Continuing community engagement and regular communication of progress will ensure that the Strategic Plan moves from planning to implementation and achievement.

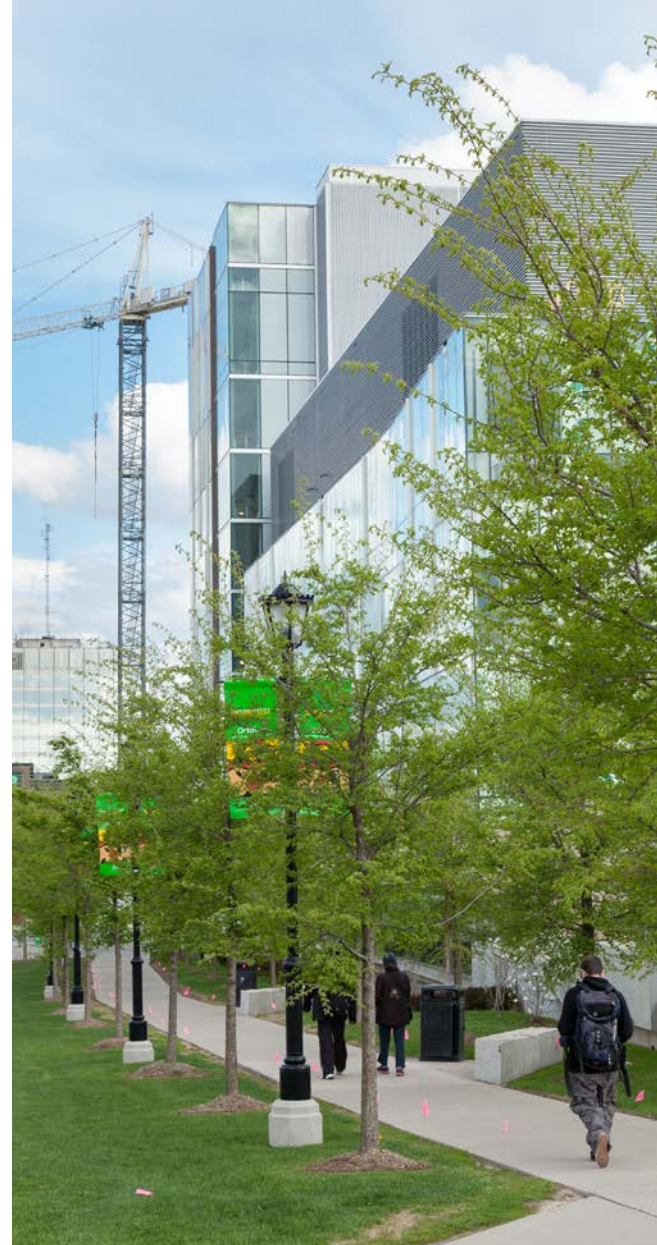
### **Communication of the plan**

Communication will be a key factor in the success of the Strategic Plan implementation. The Corporate Strategic Plan will be shared with the community and staff, area municipalities, community partners and other organizations. In support of environmental sustainability, we will minimize paper-based communication and maximize digital communication methods.

### **Progress monitoring and reporting**

Regular reporting on the strategic planning process will demonstrate to Council, the public and staff how the strategic objectives are being achieved across the organization. Annual reports and a dashboard of measured results will be developed to ensure citizens and community partners are aware of the progress.

The Region's Strategic Plan is an ongoing process. Over the next several years it will be important to be conscious of new challenges and emerging issues and the Region will need to be flexible in order to respond. Accordingly, the Plan will be reviewed in June 2021, to provide an opportunity to refine any of the objectives and/or add or delete priority actions in order to respond to significant changes in circumstances.





## Message from the Chief Administrative Officer



Services provided by the Region of Waterloo touch the community on a daily basis. The Region's Strategic Plan provides a framework to ensure our programs and services are as efficient and effective as possible and reflect the needs of citizens. Our Strategic Plan guides priority setting for Regional Council and staff and provides direction on specific actions we hope to accomplish during this term of Council.

One of the most rewarding aspects of developing this Strategic Plan has been the way in which citizens and Regional staff have engaged in the process to shape the future of our community. I would like to thank everyone who has helped shape the vision and priorities reflected in this plan. I would also like to extend a special acknowledgment to the Region's Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Management Team for their vital role in the strategic planning and implementation process.

As we move forward with our Strategic Plan, we know that the journey will come with challenges and opportunities and will require the Region to lead by example. Our Mission provides a steady reminder of how to do just that:

**We serve** with caring and responsible public service.

**We engage** by listening and responding to community needs.

**We inspire** by conducting ourselves with openness to enhance public trust and confidence.

Our programs and services make a difference in the lives of residents every day. By providing excellent service and value for money, we hope to enhance public trust and confidence in the Region of Waterloo well into the future.

Sincerely,

Mike Murray, *Chief Administrative Officer*





## For more information

We invite you to stay in touch with the Region's Strategic Plan. Visit our website, contact us by phone/e-mail or request your own copy of the Strategic Plan. The plan is available in other formats upon request. For information or alternative format please contact:

### **Chief Administrator's Office**

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### **Corporate Leadership Team (department contacts):**

Mike Murray, *Chief Administrative Officer*

Jane Albright, *Commissioner, Human Resources & Citizen Service*

Craig Dyer, *Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner, Corporate Services*

Thomas Schmidt, *Commissioner, Transportation and Environmental Services*

Rod Regier, *Commissioner, Planning, Development & Legislative Services*

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, *Commissioner, Community Services*

Hsiu-Li Wang, *Acting Medical Officer of Health*

Anne Schlorff, *Acting Commissioner, Public Health and Emergency Services*



REGION OF WATERLOO  
**Strategic  
Focus** 2019-2023



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To view the detailed Strategic Plan online or request alternative formats, visit [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca). Click on “Regional Government” to find the Strategic Plan.

For more information on Regional services contact the Regions’ Service First Call Centre at 519-575-4400, deaf and hard of hearing (TTY): 519-575-4608.

