



Join a Conversation that Matters! Share your thoughts and ideas

Help set the Region of Waterloo's Priorities for 2015 – 2018



Background Document
February 2015

A New Strategic Plan for the Region of Waterloo

The Region of Waterloo provides more than 60 per cent of government services directly and indirectly to the community. Regional Council will be reviewing these services and developing new priorities for their 2015-2018 Council term.

What is a Strategic Plan?

Much has changed and much has been achieved by the Region of Waterloo since the development of the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan. To remain focused and relevant, the Region is developing a new Strategic Plan for the 2015-2018 term of Council. The Strategic Plan provides focus and clarity to guide actions and future decisions for the Region of Waterloo. It is a long-term planning document that guides the Region's priority setting and is the foundation that supports all other plans, policies and initiatives.

Your input is important

Community members and partner organizations play a significant role in helping to identify where to focus limited human and financial resources on the most pressing priorities of the community. To collect this input, the Region has launched an extensive consultation program that provides multiple opportunities to get involved in order to ensure that the Region's Strategic Plan reflects the most pressing priorities of our community.

Information gathered from the public will be used in the development of the Region's Strategic Plan. In addition, input will inform the current review of Regional services to ensure that the Region provides the best value to the community. The service review will determine whether there are ways to provide current programs and services more efficiently and effectively and/or whether we should consider adjusting the level of service to better reflect changing circumstances in our community.



Information on the public input opportunities can be found on the 'Public Input' page on the Region's website at: <http://bit.ly/regionstratchat>.

Purpose of this Document

This document has been prepared to provide background information to participants so that individuals have the opportunity to review the trends and issues facing our community as well as the role the Region has in our community. This document will be revised as the consultation process evolves in order to capture issues identified by the public throughout the process.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Government in Waterloo Region

There are four levels of 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.
3. Provincial level of government.
4. Federal level of government.



Generally Table 1 provides an overview of the services delivered by Provincial and Federal levels of government and Table 2 provides an overview of services provided at the municipal level:

Table 1: Provincial and Federal levels

Provincial Premier and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)	Federal Federal (Prime Minister & MPs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Care and Hospitals • Schools and Education • Tourism and Culture • Labour • Municipal Government • Property and Civil rights • Environment and Natural Resources • Highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Immigration • Foreign Policy • Armed Forces and Defense • Currency and Banking • Regulation of Trade and Commerce • Postal Services • Supreme Court • Agriculture • Transportation
<p>Source: City of Kitchener - City Hall 101 http://www.kitchener.ca/en/insidcityhall/resources/city_hall_101-2013.pdf</p>	

The Region of Waterloo and the local area municipalities (Cities and Townships) are responsible for different services as outlined in Table 2. There are core services that municipalities are mandated to provide and there are other services that are optional.

Table 2 - Municipal Responsibilities

Shared Responsibilities	
Region of Waterloo	Local Area Municipalities
Water Supply	Water Distribution and Billing
Wastewater Treatment	Wastewater Collection and Billing
Regional Roads (Main Arterial) and Traffic Signals	Local Streets (Residential and Collector)
Regional Official Plan and Policies	Zoning By-laws and Neighbourhood Plans
Rural Library System	City Library System
Emergency Response (Ambulance)	Emergency Response (Fire Protection)
Debentures (for all municipalities)	Tax Collection (for area and region)
Regional Licensing and By-Law Enforcement (e.g. taxis, lawn watering, tree cutting etc.)	Local Licensing and By-law Enforcement (e.g. parking, noise, property standards etc.)
Economic Development	Economic Development

Responsibilities Not Shared	
Region of Waterloo	
Public Health (Child and Family Health, Healthy Living, Sexual Health, Infectious Diseases Program, Dental Health Programs, Population Health Assessment, Emergency Medical Services, and Health Protection.)	
Social Services (Employment and Income Support - Ontario Works, Children’s Services, Senior’s Services, Social Planning)	
Waste Management (Landfill, Recycling, Collection)	
Public Transit (Conventional and Specialized)	
Region of Waterloo International Airport	
Cultural Services (Waterloo Region Museum, Schneider Haus and McDougall Cottage)	
Emergency Planning	
Community Housing	
Provincial Offences Court Administration	

Local Area Municipalities
Building Inspections and Permits
Cemetery Management
Vital Statistics (Births, Deaths, Marriage)
Land Severances
Local Economic Development
Parks and Recreational Programs

To find out more about Regional programs and services see the “Region’s Role in the Community.”



Regional Council

Regional Council

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 lower-tier municipality.
- The head of Regional Council is the Regional Chair who is elected is elected at-large from all 7 municipalities.



Regional Councillors for 2015-2018 Term of Council:

Ken Seiling	Regional Chair
Sue Foxton	North Dumfries Township, Mayor
Sandy Shantz	Woolwich Township, Mayor
Les Armstrong	Wilmot Township, Mayor
Joe Nowak	Wellesley Township, Mayor
Doug Craig	City of Cambridge, Mayor
Karl Kiefer	Cambridge
Helen Jowett	Cambridge
Berry Vrbancic	City of Kitchener, Mayor
Tom Galloway	Kitchener
Geoff Lorentz	Kitchener
Karen Redman	Kitchener
Wayne Wettlaufer	Kitchener
Dave Jaworsky	City of Waterloo, Mayor
Jane Mitchell	Waterloo
Sean Strickland	Waterloo

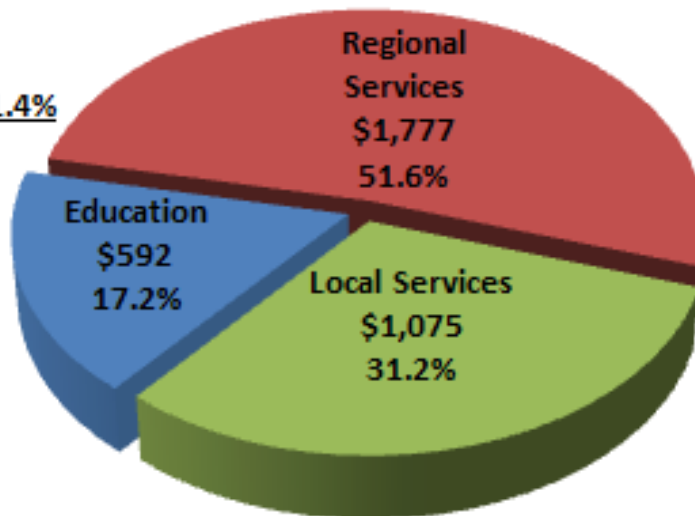
How are Municipal Government Services Paid For?

- Property taxes (the value of “real property” owned by individuals or corporations)
- User fees (tipping fees; bus fares)
- Licence and permit fees (taxi licenses; deck/fence permits)
- Transfer payments (e.g. provincial funds for social assistance, affordable housing, child care subsidy, public health programs)

**REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO
2014 Average Residential Property Tax Bill ***

Total Tax Bill

2014	\$ 3,444
2013	<u>\$ 3,397</u>
	<u>\$ 47</u> 1.4%



* Based on an average residential property having a market value of \$291,500. For 2013, the average residential property market value is \$281,000.

Waterloo Region – The Community at a Glance

In order to effectively plan for the future, the Region needs to review a broad range of information on issues and trends that are likely to impact the community and the organization over the short, medium and long term. The following summary provides a snapshot of emerging opportunities, issues and challenges identified as we begin the process to identify priorities and plan for the future.

Demographic Trends: Growing, Aging, and Diversifying

- Waterloo Region's 2013 population was 563,000 (estimated 569,000 at December 31, 2014).
- The population growth rate from 2006 – 2011 surpassed both the provincial and national averages.
- Waterloo region is the 4th largest metropolitan population in Ontario and 10th largest in Canada.
- Our population is expected to grow by more than 190,000 people by 2031.
- 87.7 per cent of residents live in cities.
- 12.3 per cent live in townships.
- Median age of Waterloo region's population is 37.7 years – younger than the Ontario average of 40.4 years.
- 12.5 per cent of the population are people over the age of 65.
- People over the age of 75 represent the fastest growing segment of the population. One in five people in Waterloo Region will be over 65 by 2031.
- It is a multicultural community – 22.3 per cent of the population are immigrants and there are 189 different ethnicities represented in Waterloo Region.
- Between 2006 and 2011, 15,465 people immigrated to Waterloo Region, representing a key component of overall population growth over that period.
- By 2031, it is estimated that 1 in 3 region residents will have immigrated to Waterloo Region.



Trends, Issues and Challenges

Economy

- Real GDP in Waterloo region has climbed from \$23.4 billion in 2011 to an estimated \$24.7 billion in 2013 (2007 dollars) – an increase of 5.6 per cent, which is higher than the provincial average of 2.5 per cent growth over the same period.
- Historically, Waterloo region has experienced lower unemployment rates than the provincial and national averages – 6.9 per cent average rate for the 2010 – 2013 period compared to Ontario average of 7.6 per cent and Canada average of 7.4 per cent for the same period.
- In 2014, the Conference Board of Canada forecast that the area's economy is expected to expand faster than Ontario's in 2014–2016, continuing a 12-year streak.
- It is still one of Canada's most manufacturing intensive economies with 1 in 5 persons employed population involved in manufacturing in 2014.
- Employment growth in all sectors is among the top in Canada for the Kitchener CMA.
- Waterloo Region's economy is recognized as being diverse. Currently, the Region's largest private sector employers include BlackBerry, Open Text, Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada, Sun Life Financial, Manulife Financial, Challenger Motor Freight, and Home Hardware. At the end of 2013, there were more than 15,000 active workplaces in Waterloo Region, as well as home-based and on-farm businesses.
- Although direct agriculture jobs are few, the impact of agriculture on employment across the entire food industry, from research, processing and end users is much greater.
- Most land in the Region is devoted to agricultural use, although agriculture-related jobs are few – even in the townships. Although direct employment numbers on the farm are minimal, the impact of our access to agricultural land and product on employment across the entire food industry, from research, processing and end users is enormous.

Development



- In 2013, building permits were issued for 2,564 residential units – an increase of 143 or 6 per cent over 2012.
 - The total value of these permits increased by 5 per cent to \$543 million from \$518 million in 2012.
 - While there were decreases in single detached units (↓10 per cent), there were increases experienced in semi-detached units (↑2 per cent), townhouses (↑9 per cent) and apartments (↑22 per cent).
 - The majority of land in the region is devoted to agricultural use.
- In 2011, there were 1,389 farms in Waterloo Region.
 - The average farm size is 160 acres – much smaller than the provincial and national averages.
 - Farm operators are also much younger, at 48.4 years old, compared to the provincial average age of 54.5.

Transportation

Grand River Transit and Rapid Transit (ION)

- Transit ridership has more than doubled since Grand River Transit (GRT) was created in 2000 – GRT now provides more than 22 million rides per year, and this continues to grow.
- GRT operates more than 240 fully accessible, conventional low floor buses that travel more than 12 million kms/year on 53 routes throughout Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo.
- Current ridership on iXpress and Route 7 between Conestoga Mall and Fairview Park Mall is 20,000 rides per day, which is approaching the 2017 target ridership of 25,000 on the ION light rail.
- Without rapid transit, the Region would need to build 500 new lane kms of roads over the next 20 years to accommodate expected growth. These new roads – the equivalent of 25 Hespeler Roads – would cost approximately \$1.4 billion and many would need to be built within existing neighbourhoods.



Roads



- Since 2004, almost \$250 million has been invested in expansion of the Regional road network.
- Region of Waterloo provides an efficient and well-managed transportation network which includes over 1,710 lane kms of roads (or 705 centre line kms), 360 linear kms of sidewalks, 299 kilometres of cycling facilities (e.g. bike lanes and paved shoulders), 481 signalized intersections, 105 bridges, 33 roundabouts and 65 large culverts. This network supports our vibrant local economy and the needs of residents and businesses.
- A review of intersections on Region of Waterloo roads that were replaced with roundabouts shows that, although the number of collisions have increased, collisions involving injuries or fatalities have been reduced by approximately 51 per cent.

Air transportation

- Region of Waterloo International Airport consistently ranks as one of the top 20 busiest airports in Canada and supports commercial, corporate and general aviation.
- American Airlines provides twice daily non-stop service to Chicago and WestJet provides non-stop daily service to Calgary. In addition, Sunwing provides weekly seasonal service to Cancun, Mexico.
- A 2013 study completed by Wilfrid Laurier University identified the total economic impact of the airport as approximately \$86 million.
- 145,508 passengers travelled through the Airport in 2014.

Active Forms of Transportation

- Walkability of the areas will be improved through introduction of ION along with new higher density mixed-use development, and the creation of improved pedestrian connections to employment centres, retail stores, public services and tourist attractions.



- People living in high walkable neighbourhoods vs low walkable neighbourhoods were found to be:
 - 3 times more likely to walk
 - 3 times more likely to cycle
 - 2.5 times more likely to take GRT
- We need to continue to expand our active transit infrastructure (bikes, walking).
- In 2012, the TravelWise program established a Transportation Management Association (TMA), which aims to connect employers interested in Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives to achieve meaningful, long-term changes that encourage citizens to use alternative methods of commuting like transit, cycling, walking and carpooling. The TMA has grown to 26 organizations as of August, 2014. More than 25,000 employees of these organizations are eligible for TMA services, such as the GRT corporate discount transit passes, and emergency rides home.

Environment

Improving Our Air

- Air pollution from local transportation emissions decreased from 52,000 tonnes in 2010 to 47,000 tonnes in 2013 partly due to cleaner burning engines and fuel (via legislated standards). However, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from all vehicles registered in Waterloo Region increased from 1.88 million tonnes in 2010 to 1.92 million tonnes in 2013 due to increased kms travelled.
 - Over 25,000 tonnes of GHG emissions were prevented by improving the energy efficiency of Regional buildings and traffic signals, using renewable energy, greening our fleet of vehicles, improving wastewater operations and reducing landfill gas emissions. Corporately, our GHG emission reductions in one year were equivalent to taking 5,500 cars off the road. Implementation of the Region's Corporate GHG Action Plan has also yielded almost \$400,000 in energy/fuel savings and \$180,000 in revenue from solar photovoltaic systems on Regional buildings.
 - The Region has shown leadership in GHG mitigation by reducing its corporate emissions by 15 per cent in the first two years of implementing their action plan. The next challenge will be to ensure investments in new infrastructure are resilient to changing climate conditions.



Protecting Our Land

- Trees are a precious natural resource as they provide habitats and travel corridors for wildlife, beautify our communities, purify the air, act as sound barriers and produce oxygen.
- As of 2005, 19,300 square metres of the Waterloo landfill site had been capped and re-vegetated with trees and shrubs with the long-term goal to visually blend back the site with the Environmentally Sensitive Policy Area, and make the land available for passive recreation use. In total, the re-vegetated areas at the Waterloo landfill cover an area of 2.8 hectares and contain more than 11,250 trees and shrubs.
- Hundreds of projects have been implemented to ensure rural waste quality including the planting of over 130,000 trees along the watershed.

Waste & Recycling



- There is an expected 20-year capacity left in our landfill site.
- Waste diversion programs have resulted in an increase in residential waste diversion from landfill from 51 per cent to 53 per cent between 2010 and 2013 even as the region's population increases each year.
- The first blue box program ever was launched in Kitchener in 1983.
- Because 40 per cent of household waste is organic, the green bin program offers the single largest potential to divert household waste.

Water & Wastewater

- Each day, the Region's 13 Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) treat 182 million litres of wastewater - enough to fill about 70 Olympic-sized swimming pools.
- Upgrades to both the Waterloo and Kitchener WWTPs will improve the quality of effluent discharged to the Grand River and maintain reliability by replacing aging equipment at the plant.
- The upgrades completed to date have reduced ammonia concentrations in the effluent going into the Grand River by 80 per cent.
- The Region's water supply comes from 2 sources – 80 per cent groundwater pumped from supply wells and 20 per cent surface water from the Grand River.
- The water infrastructure system is complex and consists of more than 100 supply wells, elevated storage tanks, reservoirs, pumping stations, the Mannheim Water Treatment Plant and Iron and Manganese Treatment plants.
- In 2013, water efficiency programs achieved a cumulative water savings of 9,524 million litres per day (MLD) of water - enough to supply the needs of 13,500 average households.
- From 2000 – 2013, water consumption decreased by 9 per cent while the population served grew by 26 per cent over the same period.
- Declining water demands have shifted the Region's 20 to 30-year needs away from a Great Lake pipeline in favour of investments to improve and extend the life of the existing supply systems.



Income, Health and Well Being

- In 2011, Waterloo Region had a median individual income of \$32,780 and a median household income of \$69,706, both of which were higher than provincial medians.
- In 2011, 40 per cent of tenant-occupied households were spending more than 30 per cent of their total income on shelter costs, while 17.2 per cent of owner households reported the same, suggesting renters are having a more difficult time achieving affordable living. In each case, figures were below the provincial and national averages.
- In 2011, approximately 12 per cent of the Region's population were living in low-income households according

to the Low Income After Tax (LIM-AT) measure. This was slightly below the provincial and national averages.

- 34.9 per cent of the population aged 12 years and older in Waterloo Region consume vegetables and fruit five or more times per day. This represents a decrease over time from 2009-2010.
- 52.6 per cent of the population aged 12 years and older in Waterloo Region are moderately active or active during their leisure time, a similar proportion to the provincial average.
- There has been a significant increase in demand for emergency shelter from families over the past six years.
- Since 2009 and the end of 2013, the Region has helped to create 513 new affordable housing units (373 new rental and 140 affordable homeownership).
- The waitlist for community housing in 2013 was 3, 287, which has fluctuated over the past few years.

Children's Services and Early Learning Programs

- There are 30,815 children birth to age four living in Waterloo Region and a total of 81,795 children birth to age 12.
- In 2014, there were 10,927 licensed childcare spaces in Waterloo region including centre-based care, home care, school-based care and school board operated programs.
- Centre-based Early Learning Child Care (ELCC) includes child care centres, day care programs, nursery schools and preschools. Currently there are 137 licensed ELCC centres in Waterloo Region and approximately 4,889 centre-based ELCC spaces.
- There are about 465 homes currently operating with about 1,875 spaces available.
- Before and after school programs, operated by the school boards, had 2,142 children registered for September 2014. Before and after school programs, operated by licensed ELCC programs, had 4,163 spaces available for September 2014.
- As of September 2014, 84 per cent of schools in Waterloo Region are offering before and after school programs (115 schools).
- \$8,598 - \$14,875 is the annual cost range for a 3-year-old child to attend a centre-based licensed early learning and child care program on a full-time basis.
- \$9,750 is the annual cost for one 3-year-old child to attend a home-based licensed early learning and child care program on a full-time basis.
- \$4,656 - \$4,753 is the annual cost range for one 4 to 7-year-old child to attend a school-based before and after school program.
- In 2013, an average of 2,926 children received child care subsidy per month.
- Most families (54 per cent) that receive child care subsidy have an income of \$20,000 or less per year.
- Families contribute a monthly amount to child care ranging from \$0 - \$916.67, depending on their family income.
- 80 per cent of families receiving Child Care Fee Subsidy are single-parent families and 20 per cent are two-parent families.



Crime and Safety

- Since 2010, the crime severity index and violence severity index in Waterloo Region has fallen significantly, mirroring a Canada wide trend.
- Our crime rate remains below the federal average, but it has risen above the Ontario average.

Citizen Service

- Telephone is still the most common method citizens use to contact the Region.
- Calling the Region is easy through the Service First Call Centre (SFCC) with one main number for Regional services – 519-575-4400.
- Citizens can talk to a real person 24/7.
- The SFCC currently handles 22,000 calls per month on average. To date, more than 80 per cent of calls are answered within 60 seconds.
- 28 per cent of people ages 18-34 prefer to use new and emerging technologies rather than traditional channels to access government services (online payments, mobile devices, social media).

Questions to think about...

Answer as many questions as you would like and return your responses to the facilitator at the end of the session. Or you can submit your responses to staff found on the last page of this document.

Thank you for your participation! Your insights are appreciated!

1. What makes Waterloo Region a desirable place to live, work or play?
2. What would you say needs to be improved or changed in this community?
3. Are there any major trends or issues you feel the Region needs to pay attention to in the strategic planning process?

4. Are there programs or services that the Region of Waterloo needs to:
- Stop /change/ improve efficiencies? (Reduce its costs, even if it means less or worse service).

 - Start happening/providing in this community (even if it costs more money)
5. Thinking about any experience you have had when using regional programs and services, what was the experience like?
- a. Did you face any barriers or challenges when accessing Region of Waterloo programs and services? What were they?

 - b. What could be improved?

 - c. Do you have suggestions or specific actions that the Region could take to be more inclusive and welcoming of diverse populations?

