

Region of Waterloo
Planning, Development, and Legislative Services
Council and Administrative Services

To: Regional Council
Meeting Date: March 19, 2025
Report Title: Municipal Diversity Plan – Waterloo Regional Police Services Board (2025)

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo:

- Adopt the 2025 Diversity Plan for the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board;
- Maintain the current composition of the Board at seven members.
- Staff will return prior to the 2026 appointment of the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board with a review and update of the Municipal Diversity Plan to outline public engagement strategies, and update of application process; and
- That the Regional Chair write a letter to the province to advocate for the recommended knowledge and experience for provincial representatives who are appointed to the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board;

as outlined in report PDL-CAS-25-006, dated March 19, 2025.

2. Purpose / Issue:

The purpose of this report is to present a Municipal Diversity Plan (the Plan) for appointments to the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board (WRPSB) in accordance with the requirements under the *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019 (CSPA) and to ratify the current size of the WRPSB.

3. Strategic Plan:

This report aligns with the Region's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan to create equitable services and opportunities. This objective emphasizes fostering inclusive and diverse communities, as well as ensuring that appointments to boards, such as the WRPSB, are reflective of and responsive to community needs.

4. Report Highlights:

- The *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019 came into effect in 2024, requiring

municipalities to implement a Municipal Diversity Plan to ensure Police Service Boards are representative of their community's diversity through the appointment process.

- The adoption of the 2025 Diversity Plan ensures that the Region will be in compliance with section 28(1) of the CSPA, with the goal of improving police practices, community relations, and overall effectiveness by mandating diverse representation.
- The WRPSB currently consists of seven members. It is recommended to maintain this composition as it is considered effective and manageable for the Region's needs. The current composition of seven members supports effective governance and decision-making. It provides a manageable structure that allows for a diverse range of perspectives while maintaining operational efficiency. This composition aligns with practices observed in similar jurisdictions and meets the Region's requirements.
- Staff are recommending that the Regional Chair send a letter of advocacy to the province to advocate the consideration of the Region's Municipal Diversity Plan for the provincial appointment process to the WRPSB.
- The 2025 Diversity Plan will be implemented in collaboration with the Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Team and the WRPSB, to ensure alignment with the Region's commitment to reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Prior to the next appointment process in 2026, staff will return to Council to present findings from public consultation, review and updates of the Municipal Diversity Plan, and appointment process for the WRPSB.

5. Background:

The CSPA came into effect on April 1, 2024, representing a significant shift in the framework surrounding policing in Ontario. This Act aims to modernize policing practices, enhance community safety, and ensure that police services are accountable and inclusive. A key aspect of the CSPA is the requirement for municipalities to develop and implement a Municipal Diversity Plan to guide appointments to local police service boards.

The Municipal Diversity Plan

The CSPA mandates that municipalities prepare and approve a Municipal Diversity Plan to ensure police service boards reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Section 28 of the CSPA requires that:

- "Every municipality that maintains a municipal board shall prepare and, by resolution, approve a diversity plan to ensure that the members of the municipal

board appointed by the municipality are representative of the diversity of the population in the municipality.”

The Plan will guide the appointments of the WRPSB starting in the 2026 term, ensuring the board is representative of its diverse community and aligns with the Region’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, as outlined in the CSPA, the appointment process which will be prescribed in the Municipal Diversity Plan will apply to both appointees from the community and members of Regional Council on the police service board.

The Plan must be approved by April 1, 2025, to comply with statutory requirements, and reviewed at least once every four years. Staff will return to Council prior to the next term’s appointments of the WRPSB to provide an update, review the Plan, as well as discuss the findings from public consultation, the updated application process, and training offered to the WRPSB.

Implementation and Engagement

When appointments to a police service board are made, the CSPA requires municipalities to take reasonable steps to promote the availability of the appointment, having regard to the need to ensure that police service boards are representative of the communities they serve.

The principal goal of the Plan is to ensure members of the WRPSB are reflective of the diverse communities they serve. The revised CSPA, under section 36, mandates that councils establish training requirements for board members, including topics such as human rights and systemic racism. In line with this, the Region will implement REDI training for municipal council appointees and community representatives, ensuring compliance with the CSPA and the Municipal Diversity Plan. While training for provincial appointees is not mandated, the Region will encourage their participation in this essential training to foster a more inclusive and informed board.

To support this work, Regional staff have engaged with representatives from the Region of Peel, Niagara Region, Durham Region, and Halton Region to gain insight into the framework, implementation, and outcomes of their Diversity Plans, which were developed in response to the CSPA. These discussions have provided valuable perspectives on best practices and challenges encountered in the development and execution of such plans.

Size of the Police Services Board

Section 31(3) of the CSPA requires municipalities to determine the size of the police service boards. The WRPSB currently consists of seven members, including three representatives from Regional Council, three provincially appointed representatives, and one appointed member from the community. Through consultation, the current size

of the board is recommended to stay, as it is considered effective and manageable for the Region's needs at this time.

Risk Considerations

The development of a Municipal Diversity Plan offers an opportunity to include diverse perspectives in decision-making that impacts various groups within the Region of Waterloo. Recommendations have been made, in accordance with the CSPA, to ensure that the membership of the WRPSB is comprised of individuals with the necessary skill sets, knowledge, and lived experience needed to ensure representation is reflective of the community it serves. A lack of follow-through on these recommendations could result in the perception that this work is performative, as well as the unintentional perpetuation of existing conditions that may harm or negatively impact the well-being of some communities in the Region. Removing barriers, including systemic and institutional barriers, is necessary to ensuring equitable opportunities and participation for all members of the community.

Activities such as reviewing policies and procedures related to the selection and appointment of members to committees and boards provide an opportunity to promote fairness, transparency, and inclusivity while addressing potential systemic barriers that could impact diverse representation. Facilitating participation from individuals with lived experience, including those affected by negative interactions with institutions, is essential to ensuring meaningful contributions and the potential for substantive change. It is essential that all board members possess the knowledge and experience required to make effective and informed decisions that address the concerns and needs of all communities in the Region of Waterloo. Board members should have a strong understanding of the community, ensuring that those who have been most impacted are adequately represented.

The recommendations outlined in the Municipal Diversity Plan, along with its implementation and ongoing review, will require appropriate resources. A lack of these resources may limit efforts to ensure broader participation and adequate representation in decision-making roles, which could hinder the Region's ability to address systemic challenges effectively.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities:

The Region of Waterloo recognizes the importance of engaging with area municipalities and the public to ensure the Municipal Diversity Plan aligns with community needs and legislative requirements. While formal consultations with local municipalities, staff, and community stakeholders, including the Police Service Board, have not yet taken place, planning is underway to initiate these discussions. Staff will continue to advance consultation efforts with area municipalities and key stakeholders as the plan progresses.

Public:

In 2026, the Region of Waterloo will conduct public consultations in advance of the next term's appointments of the Waterloo Regional Police Service Board. The objective is to encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to apply for board positions and for the public to be aware of the recommended knowledge and experience in the appointment process, as mentioned in the Municipal Diversity Plan.

7. Financial Implications:

The Municipal Diversity Plan highlights potential training opportunities for the WRPSB that will require funding. Funding for this initiative will be sourced from current operating budgets or will be proposed through the existing budgetary process.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Adopting the 2025 Municipal Diversity Plan for the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board will ensure compliance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* while reinforcing the Region's commitment to reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion in governance.

Upon approval by Regional Council, staff will proceed with implementing the plan in collaboration with the REDI team and other stakeholders. Further review and updates of the Plan and its implementation will be provided prior to the next term's appointments of the WRPSB.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: Municipal Diversity Plan 2025 - The Regional Municipality of Waterloo

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