

Region of Waterloo

Corporate Services

Corporate Finance

To: Strategic Planning and Budget Committee

Meeting Date: December 3, 2025

Report Title: Responses to Councillor Questions

1. Recommendation

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To respond to requests for information from Regional Councillors made during the 2026 Plan and Budget process.

3. Strategic Plan:

The Region of Waterloo is committed to providing reliable, critical services to residents. Guided by our Growing with Care strategic plan, the annual plan and budget process prioritizes initiatives and investments that advance all four strategic priority areas, including: Homes for All, Climate Aligned Growth, Equitable Services and Opportunities, and Resilient and Future Ready Organization

4. Report Highlights:

Through the 2026 plan and budget process, Councillors have requested information relating to various items and regional programs. This report addresses requests related to public transportation including accessible and rural transit services; changes to waste services; water and wastewater costs; revenue generation such as digital ads; adjustments to capital plans; contracts, consulting and third party services; and information on discretionary and mandatory training, projects, and studies planned for 2026.

5. Background:

Councillor Questions: Through the 2026 plan and budget process, Councillors have requested information relating to various items and regional programs, and responses from staff for these requests are outlined below.

1. Provide information on the Region's growth rate (population)

Waterloo Region's population is projected to reach 1,023,000 residents by 2051. This projection is developed in collaboration with Area Municipalities and regularly reviewed by staff.

Population growth does not follow a straight-line. There are years of high growth and years of lower growth. We anticipate continued growth over the long term, despite lower-than-average growth over the next few years.

Recent federal immigration policies (i.e. a reduction in International Student visas) will continue to have an effect on local population growth until 2028. Following that, population growth is expected to return to approximately 10,000 new residents per year.

While the 2025-2028 projection shows lower growth than has been seen since our long-term average, it is offset by recent historical years of significantly higher than average growth.

The vast majority of Waterloo Region growth is made up of residents moving here from the Greater Toronto Area, for school, jobs and Waterloo Region's quality of life. 20% of our growth is due to local births.

It's unknown if there will be future policies that will also impact population projections, staff continue to update our projections as new policies and economic outlooks are announced.

2. How does the Region's cost for people (34%) compare to our municipal comparators?

People costs represent approximately 34% of 2026 tax supported operating budget expenditures (excluding user rates and Police Services). A portion of the compensation costs are offset by numerous provincial/federal subsidies at varying levels, including funding for Paramedic Services (50% and 100%), Public Health (65% and 100%), Ontario Works (50% and 100%), Children's Services (50%, 80% and 100%), Seniors' Services (varying rates), and Public Transit (reflecting provincial gas tax revenues).

Based on information provided through the Financial Information Return (FIR), which municipalities submit annually to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, salaries, wages and employee benefits accounted for an average of 43% of total operating expenditures (excluding user rates and Police Services) in

2024 across all Ontario municipalities. The percentage of operating expenditures attributable to compensation varies based on the services offered by each municipality. Comparing the Region of Waterloo to other regional peers (specifically Durham Region, Halton Region, Niagara Region, Peel Region and York Region), people costs accounted for 28%-41% of total operating expenses for 2024, with the average being 35%. Based on available FIR data for the Region's local municipalities, salaries, wages and employee benefits accounted for an average of 54% of total operating expenditures in 2024.

3. Provide a summary of operating budgets by account from 2019 to 2026

An overview of 2019 to 2026 operating budgets (excluding Police Services) by account grouping is included in Appendix A. This summary is similar to the report included in the 2026 Preliminary Operating Budget Book found on page 7. Key operating budget drivers outlining changes from 2025 to 2026 are also included in the Appendix A.

4. Provide data on Miovision tool. How much are we putting into the 2026 budget for Miovision cameras?

For 2026, we are committed to paying Miovision \$913K in operating costs. These costs include the necessary licensing to be able to use Miovision. Should the Region opt out of paying for the licensing, then the Miovision equipment that we've invested in (~\$7m capital costs) loses its value to the Region.

The Miovision One ATMS is a system that uses cameras and other detection devices connected to the traffic signal controller at a signalized intersection, that, retrieves data about all road users, and performs advanced analytics for staff to use to optimize the operation of the traffic signals. Currently there are 540 cameras throughout the Region.

5. Provide information on water loss and prevention tools.

Water loss in our system is primarily related to inflow and infiltration (I&I). This occurs when groundwater or stormwater enters the sanitary sewer network through cracks in pipes, joints, or maintenance hole chambers. Staff are currently working with all area municipalities to gather better, region-wide figures. Initial conversations indicate that each municipality experiences different levels of loss and most have dedicated I&I programs already underway.

6. Description of the real assessment growth actuals versus projections, and the difference between them for the last 5 years.

Report COR-CFN-25-023, included on today's Strategic Planning and Budget Committee agenda, provides information with respect to 2025 assessment growth and implications for the 2026 budget. Each year we estimate assessment growth at the beginning of the budget process until actual assessment growth which is usually finalized in December. Appendix A provides a summary of weighted assessment growth and changes over the past 5 years.

7. Provide information on the cost to the region on the taxi coupon per ride. How many rides are taken through taxi coupons?

The estimated 2025 levy impact of the Taxi Coupon program is \$325,000 which is up 10% from 2024. The financial impact is based on coupons used by customers, after we reimburse taxi companies for the ride.

Rides given through taxi coupons are unavailable as these are not tracked by the taxi companies.

8. What can we do to promote existing transit routes? What is the biggest move that can be made to make progress toward the business plan (so that we are not relying so heavily on student ridership)?

Grand River Transit regularly promotes transit service and benefits to the community through marketing campaigns and in-person engagement.

The GRT Business Plan identified the three biggest ways to improve ridership: increasing network speed, improved coverage and making the service easier to use. The biggest move that can be made to progress the plan, besides not cutting existing services, would be launching the Highway Express from Conestoga Mall to Fairway Mall or increasing frequency to 10 minutes on Routes 7, 8 and 12.

Annual preliminary costs would be: \$2M for Highway Express, \$2M for Route 7 and \$3.5M for Route 8 & 12.

9. Provide information on MobilityPLUS fee increase and how it compares to other municipalities.

Currently, Grand River Transit offers the highest book value on taxi coupons.

Toronto (TTC), York (YRT), Niagara, Durham and London do not offer the taxi coupon program.

Comparator agencies book values and corresponding discounts:

- GRT (\$60 for \$30, 50% discount) – current
 - Proposed to move to (\$60 for \$40, 33% discount)
- Thunder Bay (\$35 for \$50, 30% discount)
- Peel (\$40 for \$25, 37.5% discount)
- Halton (\$20 for \$12, 40% discount)
- Hamilton (\$40 for \$24, 40% discount)
- Guelph (\$40 for \$20, 50% discount)

10. How do our ridesharing fees compare with other municipalities, and is there an opportunity to increase the fee further? Can staff provide modelling and revenue projections if the licensing fee were increased to \$0.30, \$0.40, \$0.50, or \$0.60 per trip?

The Region's ridesharing fee structure is broadly comparable to other Ontario municipalities. A comparison slide presented during budget deliberations showed that Waterloo Region's rates are generally aligned with peer jurisdictions, with Council retaining full authority to adjust rates as desired.

In 2024, the Region generated approximately \$452,000 in licensing fees (at \$0.11 per trip) and \$287,100 in accessibility fees (at \$0.07 per trip). The accessibility fee increased to \$0.10 per trip mid-2025, and revenues are projected to reach \$492,000 by end of 2026. Licensing fee revenues are projected at \$545,000 by the end of 2025.

The Region currently charges a \$0.11 per-trip licensing fee and a \$0.10 per-trip accessibility fee, for a total of \$0.21 per trip. These rates are below those in many comparable Ontario municipalities, including Toronto (\$0.45 total), Hamilton (\$0.39), and London (\$0.50), but higher than Ottawa (\$0.22), Oshawa (\$0.20), and Niagara Region (\$0.16).

Staff are recommending that the per-trip licensing fee be increased to \$0.25 starting in January 2026, which would bring the total per-trip charge to \$0.35. This aligns with peer municipalities and reflects inflationary and industry trends since the Region last adjusted its fee in 2016. Council retains full discretion to increase the fee further if desired.

Funds from licensing fees are deposited in a separate account. Accessibility fees are directed to the Accessibility Fund, which supports driver incentives, van subsidies for accessible taxis, and the TaxiScrip program.

In response to this question, staff completed an additional review of ride volumes and feel confident that projected ride volumes can be increased from the initial estimate of 3.62 million to 4.96 million riders. This translates into an additional \$335,000 in additional revenue that can be added to the 2026 operating budget.

If Council were to increase the licensing fee by an additional \$0.05 per trip, bringing the total trip charge to \$0.40 per trip, it would generate \$248K revenue, assuming that ridership would be maintained at 4.96 million riders despite the additional fee increase.

Staff note that higher fees (above \$0.40) may present operational or legal risks, as seen in London, where Uber has legally challenged fee increases against the City of London when the municipality began charging a \$0.50 per trip fee with plans to increase to 0.60 by 2027.

In addition, Ontario's Fall Economic Statement published in November 2025 indicated the province's intention to engage with rideshare companies to explore the standardization of guidelines in Ontario, including fee structures that are managed by municipalities. This initiative does not have a timeline at this time, but staff will continue to monitor any developments or decisions made by province.

11. How much staff time and funding are required for the Region's participation in the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program?

The Region of Waterloo is a member of the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, which is delivered and funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI Canada. Participation in the PCP program is voluntary and free of charge. The Region does not contribute any Regional funds or staff resources to the program.

The PCP program provides municipalities with free tools, technical support, and consulting resources to assist in developing and implementing local climate and sustainability initiatives. The Region has made use of these resources and has followed the PCP program's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory guidelines, which are widely recognized as the industry standard. Staff are currently exploring updates to the Region's inventory methods to reflect emerging best practices in GHG reporting.

12. What is the surplus reserve balance for rural transit (Kiwanis)?

The 2025 opening balance in the GRT MobilityPLUS Rural Reserve was \$1.9 million. Through the 2025 budget \$250,000 was approved to fund operations and \$113,000 was approved to fund capital initiatives (project 66011 Vehicle Replace

MobilityPLUS Rural). Through the 2026 preliminary budget \$250,000 is to be utilized for operations and \$130,000 is to fund capital initiatives (capital project 66011 Vehicle Replace MobilityPLUS Rural).

13. What can we do to generate more revenue from wrapping buses/trains and ensuring they are still accessible (i.e. windows)?

In 2023, Regional Council increased the amount of full bus wraps from 5 to 15 (5% of our fleet) and an additional 10% of the fleet to be wrapped with the lower 50% of the windows uncovered to increase revenues (informed by report TSD-TRS-23-012). ION trains remained ineligible for exterior advertising.

Advertising revenue is subject to volatility in the market, as the economy lags, we see this reflected in our advertising revenue. Our contract with Pattison pays us an annual guarantee (\$1.74M in 2025) and pays residuals based on overperformance.

Currently we are below expected sales and there is no guarantee that increasing the number of buses or trains for exterior advertising will generate more revenue.

14. Provide a tracking list with asks and budget impacts being brought forward by Councillors.

Budget related motions are requested by December 10th and added to the relevant December 16th agenda.

15. What are the implications of bringing back Sani-cans into the 2026 budget? How can this be incorporated without a levy increase?

To continue collecting the 57 sani-cans in Kitchener (Downtown and Belmont Village), New Hamburg, Waterloo, and Wellesley it would cost approximately \$120,000 a year, entirely funded by the tax levy, unless directed to seek recovery from area municipalities.

16. Provide information/options around reducing bulky item pick-up even further, such as to twice a year, or once every few months.

As recommended on the November 18, there would be some savings to move bulky item pick up from bi-weekly to monthly. To further reduce the service for bulky item pick up (e.g. to quarterly or twice a year), it is expected to yield minimal cost savings due to the contract already accounting for the equipment needed to offer the service as recommended. We anticipate demand increasing on the days we would offer bulky item, so fuel and staffing costs would not

decrease.

The current bi-weekly schedule spreads out the demand and is accounted for in the contract with trucks and staffing to accommodate. The proposed change to monthly scheduling can be accommodated with the existing fleet.

Bulky item pick up will support residents by collecting unwanted containers and green bins after March 2026. If we reduced bulky item pick up further, we may incur additional costs to collect existing containers or residents will have to wait to dispose of them.

17. Provide a more detailed accounting of how many trucks will be utilized once the new waste pick-up is established. Information to include a step-by-step waste pickup process, and detailed accounting of how many trucks was focused on double bag collection days.

In May 2024, the Request for Proposal (P2023-33) for “Automated Cart-Based, and Manual Waste Collection, and Supply, Initial Distribution and On-Going Maintenance of Carts Within the Region of Waterloo” was awarded to Emterra Environmental (Emterra) to provide the following residential services as of March 2026:

- Cart-based collection of garbage (bi-weekly). Additional garbage bags with "extra garbage tag" attached will be collected beside the cart
- Cart-based organics collection (weekly)
- Manual collection of yard waste bags or labelled cans (bi-weekly from April - November, on the opposite week of garbage)
- Manual collection of Christmas trees (two weeks in January)
- Manual collection of bulky and large metal items (bi-weekly, on the garbage collection day as per the collection contract, however, frequency to be confirmed during 2026 Plan & Budget)

Emterra's waste collection fleet will be comprised of lower emission compressed natural gas vehicles (CNG), as opposed to diesel-fueled vehicles. It will also include split-body waste collection vehicles, which allows for two waste streams to be collected on the same vehicle in two separate compartments, reducing the number of vehicles on the road and for improved collection efficiencies.

Emterra is responsible for determining the number and type of vehicles required to perform the services under the contract to ensure daily service completion. The Region is no longer responsible for residential recycling and is not aware of Circular Materials' operational logistics for recycling such as number of trucks

and collection methodology.

The following table provides their estimated daily waste collection vehicle usage, which is subject to change based on daily and seasonal operational needs.

Sample Collection Schedule - May 2026

Week	What is collected	Truck and Details
1 & 3	Garbage Organics Bulky Item	<p>Truck 1: Garbage & Organics (G&O) are collected in this truck. This truck has two compartments (garbage and organics) and can manually collect small quantities of extra garbage bags if set out.</p> <p>Truck 2 (if needed*): Bulky items are collected in this truck and will be landfilled. This truck can collect large quantities of extra garbage bags.</p> <p>Truck 3 (if needed*): If the item is metal, a different truck will collect so it can be recycled and remove freons if required.</p> <p>*Usually G&O truck will let other trucks know if bulky or metal trucks are required, versus the trucks driving the whole route (especially in rural areas).</p>
2 & 4	Yard Waste Organics Recycling - Circular Materials (CM)	<p>Truck 1: Yard Waste & Organics are collected in this truck. This truck has two compartments and the yard waste bags and containers are manually loaded into the truck.</p> <p>Recycling (CM) truck details unknown.</p>

Sample Collection Schedule - November 2026

Week	What is collected	Truck and Details
1 & 3	Garbage	Truck 1: Garbage & Organics (G&O) are collected in

	<p>Organics</p> <p>Bulky Item</p>	<p>this truck. This truck has two compartments (garbage and organics) and can manually collect small quantities of extra garbage bags if set out.</p> <p>Truck 2 (if needed*): Bulky items are collected in this truck and will be landfilled. This truck can collect large quantities of extra garbage bags.</p> <p>Truck 3 (if needed*): If the item is metal, a different truck will collect so it can be recycled and remove freons if required.</p> <p>*Usually G&O truck will let other trucks know if bulky or metal trucks are required, versus the trucks driving the whole route (especially in rural areas).</p>
<p>2 & 4</p>	<p>Yard Waste</p> <p>Organics</p> <p>Recycling - Circular Materials (CM)</p>	<p>Truck 1: Yard Waste & Organics are collected in this truck. This truck has two compartments and the yard waste bags and containers are manually loaded into the truck. During heavy yard waste season (fall), this truck may just focus on Organics cart collection.</p> <p>Truck 2 (if needed): This truck will be used to collect yard waste, if truck 1 only collects Organics carts.</p> <p>Recycling (CM) truck details unknown.</p>

18. What is eligible to be funded by the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF)? How much the Region has received in the last 5 years, and how that money was allocated each of those 5 years?

Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) allows municipalities to invest in 18 project categories to address local priorities like waste, wastewater, public transit, roads and more. There are specific restrictions for each category. Eligible categories can be found here [Eligible Categories | Canada Community-Building Fund](#). We typically have funded roads, waste and airport expenditures. We have prioritized using this funding for tax levy items versus other items that could be covered by user rates or other funding sources. We had a significant carryover

historically that we have been drawing down over the last five years.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Projected 2025
Revenues						
Payments per agreement	16,234,557	16,972,491	16,972,491	17,710,426	18,724,948	19,229,728
Supplemental payments		16,316,138				
Total Revenues	16,234,557	33,288,629	16,972,491	17,710,426	18,724,948	19,229,728
Expenses						
Roads	18,912,971	25,628,918	18,221,000	24,070,000	11,177,413	17,370,000
Waste	2,127,219	3,497,889	975,760	97,922		
Airport		8,100,000	2,875,000			
Total Expenses	21,040,191	37,226,807	22,071,760	24,167,922	11,177,413	17,370,000
Net Carryover	(4,805,634)	(3,938,178)	(5,099,269)	(6,457,496)	7,547,535	1,859,728
Carryover Balance	21,176,792	16,733,496	13,171,553	8,398,221	2,171,527	9,990,312
Interest	362,338	376,236	325,936	230,802	271,250	-
Carryover Balance	16,733,496	13,171,553	8,398,221	2,171,527	9,990,312	11,850,040

19. Provide information on licencing fee – modelling if it goes to 30/40/50/60

(Please refer to the previous question 10 and answer.)

20. How do the hangar and land rental fees at YKF compared to those at other airports?

Hangar rental rates are more challenging to benchmark because many airports are not required to publicly post all of their fees and charges. Land leases are more available publicly. The information we have been able to gather indicates that YKF remains competitive within the market. Land rents are being raised 10% in the 2026 budget. Toronto Pearson (YYZ) is significantly higher across all fee categories, including hangar and land rental fees.

The proposed adjustment continues to support YKF as an attractive place to grow or locate a business, while taking local market conditions into considerations.

We will continue to monitor available comparator data each year to ensure that YKF remains competitive while appropriately recovering costs and supporting airport growth.

21. Provide information on Digital Ad Boards (at airport, transit stops, etc.)

Please refer to question 55.

22. Provide information on FOI fee.

In 2024, \$2,949 was collected and in 2025 to date \$1,485 has been collected. Full cost recovery for FOI requests are not possible. The Provincial regulation for these requests has not been updated since 1990, limiting our ability to recover our costs.

23. Provide information and cost on Council members going to conferences and training.

As per the Elected Offices budget summary on page 130 of the Budget Booklet, the budget for trainings and conferences for Elected Offices is \$21,000. The policy can be found in Appendix B, Councillor Conference Policy.

24. For capital – look at including Elmira bypass in 10 year projection.

An environmental assessment is underway examining the feasibility and costs associated with a by-pass for Elmira.

A report to Regional Council, with the results and recommendations from the environmental assessment, will be presented in mid-2026. A determination on adding the project to the capital plan will be made when the assessment is complete and the corresponding report discussed with Council.

25. Provide more information on options to increase the proportion of funds marked for eviction prevention.

Investments in the 2025 budget include \$2.25 million for eviction prevention efforts. This includes \$2 million to Starling for the rent bank and \$225k to SDC for their peer outreach eviction team. For 2026, we have allocated the same investment amount year over year from 2025. This funding can support anywhere from 400 families up to 625 singles/couples to avoid eviction due to lack of financial resources.

26. Provide options to be able to include Mooregate in the 2026 budget, including re-prioritization of other capital projects.

We would need to review the current list of capital projects that are funded by debt and remove or defer to later in the capital forecast. Staff did perform a full review of all debt funded projects and made adjustments from 2025. The top debt funded projects were included in the November 19, 2025 budget presentation and are shown below.

Debt Financing Only							
(\$ thousands)	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031 - 2035	2026 - 2035
WRH MP Mooregate, Kitchener	4,644	19,184	81,704	60,429	50,615	56,983	273,559
WRH MP Langs, Cambridge	33,694	7,000	-	-	-	-	40,694
GRT - Vehicle Additions Conventional	-	-	3,570	6,630	2,550	26,010	38,760
W/W Galt Process Upgrades & Expansion	300	13,000	15,000	2,000	2,000	3,700	36,000
Kitchener Central Transit Hub	874	6,208	16,045	7,175	4,402	-	34,703
East Side Lands Sanitary Servicing	-	1,500	2,500	7,000	6,000	17,000	34,000
Paramedic Station - 2033 Expansion Reporting/Centre Hub (Breslau)	-	-	-	5,000	7,000	21,000	33,000
Industrial Land Acquisition and Strategy	9,100	-	-	5,000	5,000	-	19,100
Waterloo Waste - New Cells Design & Construction	1,050	3,935	3,000	7,000	3,000	-	17,985
W/W Elmira Upgrades	-	1,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	9,000	14,000
Total Top 10 RoW	49,662	51,827	123,819	101,234	81,567	133,693	541,801
Public Safety Communications Center	8,165	70,428	80,000	10,811	3,000	-	172,404
Training Facilities Expansion	-	-	-	6,500	32,500	32,500	71,500
FYI only: Top Police use of Debt	8,165	70,428	80,000	17,311	35,500	32,500	243,904
Table Total	57,827	122,255	203,819	118,545	117,067	166,193	785,706
% of total Debt	50%	70%	85%	80%	80%		

27. Provide information on the potential savings and impacts of delaying all roundabouts for 1 year on the 2026 budget.

In general, project deferrals do not create savings, as the cost of planned work would only increase in future years and delay other capital works.

The focus in Budget 2026 for our roads is to prioritize repair work needed for our aging roads and underground infrastructure, and to address existing operational, capacity, or safety concerns. Part of this work includes four Council approved roundabout projects identified for construction in 2026, with three at existing rural intersections (New Dundee/Fischer-Hallman, Roseville/Edworthy, Sawmill/Ebycrest) and one new urban intersection aligned with the timing of development (Erb/Plaza entrance/New Road, west of Ira Needles).

In order to defer each of these projects, we would need to reassess the needs of the projects with area municipalities to determine if immediate work is required (e.g. underground infrastructure). If the infrastructure was in immediate need of attention, that work would still have to proceed into construction and then additional increased costs would be incurred in the future when the roundabout work would unfold.

Studies cited by the Transportation Association of Canada and other Canadian authoritative bodies have consistently proven the significant safety benefits of roundabouts compared to traditional intersections and they are deemed to be a “proven safety countermeasure” by the US Federal Highway Administration.

The roundabout safety pilot is exploring the effectiveness of flashing lights and raised platforms at roundabout pedestrian crossings in further enhancing pedestrian safety. Flashing lights can be paired with an audible pedestrian signal to improve crossings for those with visual limitations. The outcomes from the pilot will shape how we build and retrofit roundabouts going forward.

28. Provide information on how we are ensuring accessible safety measures are in place/fixed in the 2026 budget for LRT Phase 1 and 2.

Based on the ION Station Accessibility and Wayfinding Audit, GRT has updated its guidelines to reflect improved accessibility measures at ION stations. Implementation of high-contrast wraps and decals at platform validators and shelter edges at Fairway Station and Conestoga Station have been tested successfully. Enhanced tactile paths and stop markers have also been installed. Currently, there is no capital funding allocated to retrofit the other stations.

29. What is the Region’s plan for hotel and other commercial development on the lands surrounding the airport?

The proposed Airport Growth Plan does contemplate airport commercial development, including potential for hotel development. Timing would be triggered by the growth of air passenger numbers and a new terminal development. The Airport Growth Plan will be brought to Council early in 2026 for discussion and consideration.

30. Should runway resurfacing be scheduled during the slower season at the airport?

Runway 08-26 resurfacing work will be determined during the design phase, but it would likely be scheduled during a time when passenger impact would be the lowest. Regardless of timing, this work will still be highly disruptive and will need to be done at the best times to limit flight impacts.

This work is included in the Region's capital program, with funding allocated in 2026 for design work and construction planned for 2027.

The proposed rehabilitation focuses on the central portion of Runway 08-26, which is the area in the poorest condition. This work would involve milling and repaving approximately 50 mm of asphalt and is expected to extend the pavement life in the treated areas by 10 to 15 years.

In the event that funding for the 14-32 runway extension became available from federal budgets or other levels of government, staff would recommend we reprioritize the full resurfacing of both runways and the 14-32 extension to find cost-efficiencies and reduce overall impact on flights.

Staff are monitoring these funding opportunities closely and are actively exploring whether any new federal programs may be able to support future capital needs at YKF.

31. What options are there to recoup fees for road damage? Is there opportunity to increase the fees from aggregate suppliers?

We currently do recoup fees from aggregators for road damage. We currently recover \$200,000 annually.

32. How much do we pay for third party security across all departments? How much would it cost to do this in house? Please let us know if it would be a

financial or other advantage to bringing all security or security in certain areas in house.

To date in 2025, we spent about \$10.5M for security services. Facilities identified security efficiencies in the 2026 budget by adjusting security services based on risk and need. Facilities has estimated the cost to bring security in house would increase security costs by approximately \$1.2M annually. Staff plan to report back in 2026 with a fulsome review on security services across the corporation.

33. Provide a high-level summary of discretionary corporate projects, initiatives, or studies planned for 2026.

Corporate Services has begun an RDC Background study which is needed to update the DC Bylaw. Budget cost is \$448,000 which is funded from the DC reserve. Corporate Services is working on a report to enhance our enterprise risk management function; this will require external support. Question 44's response covers IT projects.

34. Can facilities identify the key drivers of 2026 occupancy charge increases, and provide options to moderate or delay non-essential elements—particularly given that long-term facilities planning may soon be undertaken?

Key drivers for 2026 occupancy charge increases are seen in the increase in building costs relating to utilities, facilities maintenance and contracted services (janitorial, garbage, snow, security, etc.) to align with actual costs and utilization trends based on multi-year analysis, as well as lifecycle maintenance costs which are allocated to programs occupying shared corporate buildings.

35. What 2026 solar PV and sustainability capital items could reasonably be phased into 2027–2029 without compromising progress or long-term goals?

There are four solar PV projects. One project, 200 Frederick Street, has confirmed funding and is in construction. Another, the rooftop PV project at YKF, is in the works for 2026. It projects a payback in 11 years and will reduce our carbon output at YKF by 8%. Should this rooftop project get bumped to 2027, we risk losing the 25% funding opportunity from the federal government. Specifically, at the airport project in today's dollars, the system's financial benefits will exceed all costs by \$400,000 over its life – a direct benefit to the operating budget.

The remaining are all in the design phase without funding secured.

As needed, the Region could push projects, but in doing so would not see the return from these projects and would see higher operational costs in the future.

Note that these projects, if deferred, would see an annual loss as they offset costs as well as address sustainability goals.

Site	PV size KW	Energy savings \$ (not cheques)	GHG savings in tonnes annually	Capital cost before external funding \$	Budget owner	External funding \$	Project status
WWTP 368 Mill Park Dr.	50	10,000	3.0	125,000	Wastewater	40,000	Designing
Airport	250	40,000	10.0	660,000	Airport	215,000	Designing
PSV Concession Rd.	50	10,000	3.0	125,000	PSV	40,000	Designing
Police 200 Frederick	100	22,000	8.0	180,000	Police	75,000	Construction

Other GHG projects are aligned with capital renewal plan projects that have been largely already cut to date. The remaining renewal projects have an insignificant built-in cost increase for energy efficiency/ghg component on the overall budget (e.g. domestic hot water tanks for housing, around \$40,000 increase in 2026 for electrical panels upgrades; or eight housing heat pumps pilot, around \$40,000 increase compared to gas furnace replacement) that is likely to be funded by FCM; housing windows replacement funded by the CMHC \$12M funding, and so on.

36. How are we exploring rental potential for meeting, training, or corporate spaces where appropriate?

The Region rents spaces in buildings with availability as appropriate, including rental space at WRESTRC, which is used for emergency services training. When inquiries come in to rent spaces in regional buildings that do not have their own processes (e.g. museums), Facilities looks to accommodate. Facilities currently rents out space in buildings as opportunities arise. Notably 70 Victoria and 150 Main Street currently have tenants.

37. Can Water Services compare 2026 budgeted chemical costs to 2025 actuals?

Here is a table with total chemical costs (actual) from 2021 to 2024, along with the 2025 forecast:

	Total Chemical Cost	% Increase
2021	\$ 1,366,000.00	
2022	\$ 1,732,000.00	26.8%
2023	\$ 2,411,000.00	39.2%
2024	\$ 2,908,000.00	20.6%
2025 (Forecast)	\$ 2,853,333.33	-1.9%

*We are seeing lower chemical costs this year due to two key treatment facilities being offline (both high chemical users)

The 7% increase we reference in the budget presentation for chemicals is the change we are forecasting between 2025 and 2026. We are carrying out our chemical tenders now, so that number is subject to change.

38. Are 2026 biosolids processing increases unavoidable, or can they be smoothed over multiple years?

As wastewater received for treatment increases, more biosolids are produced that must be handled at current contract unit rates, which are annually adjusted for Consumer Price Index (CPI) ([COR-TRY-22-62](#)). These costs are incurred in real time, so the resulting increase is immediate and cannot be smoothed over multiple years without creating a funding deficit.

39. Provide an inventory of all maintenance-related contracts across WRH buildings.

The Region bundles service contracts for efficiency and consistency across the organization. For example, WRH and other regional building contracts for snow removal and landscaping are bundled geographically, janitorial contractors may be bundled by type of building, whereas pest control, fire/life safety, matting, window cleaning and security are a Region wide contract. HVAC, plumbing, electrical and general repair contractors are rotational and pre-qualified. As part of the pre-qualification process hourly pricing or pricing per service is provided.

40. What capital renewals in Housing Services scheduled for 2026 could safely be re-timed?

The 2026 Housing capital renewal budget has already been reduced by 45%. There are very few new projects planned for 2026 as 80% of the requested funds are needed to cover work in progress. Approximately \$850k, set for the second phase of renewing tenant lounges and laundry rooms (which is funded from the

life cycle reserve), could potentially be deferred but would require further consultation with Housing Services as it impacts tenant quality of life. Approximately \$850k, set for the second phase of renewing tenant lounges and laundry rooms (which is funded from the life cycle reserve), could potentially be deferred but would require further consultation with Housing Services as it would negatively impact tenant quality of life.

41. Provide a list of the lowest-performing 3–5% of service hours, including ridership data, efficiency ratios, and options to restructure or consolidate these trips without affecting core coverage.

Comparable analysis was done to identify the lowest performing routes and that was presented Nov 18. Additional analysis and options to restructure would require significant additional resources.

42. Provide an assessment of additional red-light camera locations that improve safety and generate net revenue.

The implementation of additional red-light camera locations is determined through a warrant process. Unlike our Automated Speed Enforcement program, ticket processing is handled by the Toronto Joint Processing Centre, so we can only expand based on the volume they can process.

2026 budgeted revenues for Red Light Cameras are \$1.6m. The budgeted cost for the program is \$603,800.

43. What training and professional development initiatives are mandatory vs. Discretionary?

- a. Corporate mandatory training-Training required by Provincial Legislation
 - i. In Ontario, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) mandates training to foster an inclusive environment and remove barriers, while the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) requires training to ensure worker safety and prevent workplace injuries and illnesses.
- b. Corporate Mandatory Training-Employee/Leader Onboarding
 - i. Orientation to the Region and into people leader positions
 - ii. New employee orientation to the Region's vision, mission and core value
 - iii. New manager orientation, managing performance, and managing in a unionized environment
- c. Corporate Discretionary Training (all staff)
 - i. Designed to address specific skill and business needs in alignment with our Growing With Care goals and to enable a resilient, future

- ready organization.
- ii. Typical offerings include leadership development, change management, communication, customer service, wellness and technology/digital skills
- d. Department Managed Training and Professional Development (mandatory and discretionary)
- i. Department specific mandatory training
 1. Set by operational risk, job requirements, collective agreements, or the standards of the relevant Ontario Provincial Ministry (e.g., Public Health, Community Services, Transportation, Housing, Water/Wastewater, Paramedic Services).
 2. Examples: MOH public health standards training, MTO/MECP operator certifications, clinical competencies, case management standards, or emergency response protocols and health and safety training.
 - ii. Mandatory Professional Development to maintain licences/certifications
 1. Continuing professional development (CPD) required by regulatory colleges and certifying bodies (e.g., PEO, CPA, CNO, OCSWSSW, OAA, CIPHI, paramedics).
 2. Departments fund and schedule this where it is essential to practice or service delivery.
 - iii. Discretionary department Professional Development
 1. Skill building aligned to business plans (e.g., de-escalation training and customer service).
 2. Approved by managers based on operational need and budget.

44. Can IT classify 2026 projects by criticality?

Staff currently use a prioritization process that incorporates criticality. The framework considers not only mandatory and “must-do” items, (legislated requirements, end-of-life systems, and critical security risks) but also evaluates projects against factors like cost avoidance, risk mitigation, strategic alignment, and service impact.

In practice, given current pressures, the process consistently funnels us toward only the must-do projects. While the model is comprehensive, the outcome in recent years has been clear: essential, high-risk, or mandatory items rise to the top, and discretionary or efficiency-based initiatives rarely proceed.

Examples of the planned projects are:

- Upgrade TAMs as existing product approaches end of life/support
- Continuing to implement MFA to improve security
- Migrate to Windows 11 from Windows 10 - end of life/support and improve security
- New website (greater impact on resident experience and on Users/Divisions) as current platform is at end of life/support

Examples of the projects not proceeding are:

- Enterprise-wide contract management
- Service queue/on call management
- Digital lobby services at Regional Headquarters

45. What planned 2026 Communications initiatives are mandatory (e.g., legislative requirements, emergency communications) versus discretionary or enhancements?

Regional communications initiatives focus on providing residents with information they need to access services, critical information in emergencies, transparent information on program and service changes and timely updates such as road construction, engaging residents in program and service design, and value for money ensuring residents understand where their tax dollars are spent.

In 2026, the Region is required to launch a new website as the current platform will no longer be serviced. The new website will greatly improve service and information sharing with residents, within existing budgets for web services.

There will also be required elections communications in 2026.

There are no other planned communications enhancements in 2026 – staff will work to maintain current levels of service despite increasing needs and engagement with residents. For instance, according to our 2024 Ipsos Resident Survey, an increasing number of residents prefer online communications from the Region.

Examples from Q3 2025 data:

- Reach and DMs on social media have more than doubled with 7 million impressions last quarter (Q3)
- Comments on posts have doubled from 5,405 in Q1 to 10,784 in Q3.
- 48,000 phone calls received for support from residents

- almost 600,000 visits to the Region's websites (Q3)
- 28,897 visits to our engage platform with more than 3,000 resident contributions of feedback (Q3)

46. Which consulting engagements across Corporate Services are mandatory vs. optional?

Same response as question 33.

47. Does the CAO's Office have tools or criteria that could guide decisions on which 2026 initiatives may be deferred, sequenced differently, or scaled back?

Yes. The Region uses a consistent decision framework to develop the annual plan and budget. Annual Business Planning consisted of assessment of community/service needs, risks and opportunities including the application of the six Council-approved plan and budget principles. Together, these guide whether 2026 initiatives should be deferred, sequenced differently, or scaled back to balance affordability, service quality, and long-term sustainability within the 5% target Council set. Note that, in order to achieve the 5% guideline, no service expansions have been considered in the draft 2026 budget put forward by staff.

Essentially, initiatives that uphold essential service reliability, compliance, and mitigate high risk are prioritized. Other initiatives are right-sized – deferring those whose outcomes are valuable but less time-critical; resequencing and coordinating with other departments to reduce cost and disruption; and scaling back or phasing implementation of initiatives while ensuring operating impacts are sustainable.

The annual plan and budget process leverages year-round analysis and assessment through integrated processes such as the creation and implementation of growth plans (e.g. master plans) the asset management plan, capital planning, department specific prioritization frameworks (e.g. IT) and Enterprise Risk Management. The outcome of this holistic process is a rigorous, transparent approach that focuses on what matters most to residents, maintains essential services and state-of-good-repair investments, and keeps the plan and budget affordable and accountable, as our community's context continues to evolve.

48. With my motion currently on the floor regarding a Corporate Facilities Strategic Plan, can your office advise how best to ensure short-term 2026

budget decisions remain aligned with potential long-term strategic direction?

The Region's Strategic Plan guides all budget decisions. Operating budgets for buildings are set with a review of historical costs, pricing of current service contracts, and adjusted accordingly for planned renewal work. The budgets are set to ensure buildings remain in peak performance for any future change in direction or status quo.

49. In light of the motion on the floor for a Corporate Facilities Strategic Plan, can staff categorize the 2026 lifecycle projects into "must-do," "should-do," and "could-do," so we understand which items are essential this year and which could be better aligned with future strategic planning work?

To prioritize projects appropriately, we assessed the need of each project to ensure they are required and aligned with the Region's Strategic Plan. To remain within the directed rate, only projects considered "must do's" were put forward, like window replacements at Sunnyside Home and roof replacements at WRH sites that are required.

50. Which REDI initiatives planned for 2026 are mandatory (compliance, legislative, policy-required) versus discretionary or enhancements?

REDI work in 2026 is focused on continued delivery of the Upstream Fund, meeting AODA requirements and improving service accessibility, delivering on the Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with area municipalities, supporting regional departments with increasing equity in service delivery, and supporting the legislated Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan (CSWP).

Council has made a firm anti-racism commitment, unanimously passing motions to address systemic racism and oppression within the community and its own operations in 2020. This commitment along with community advocacy and input led to the creation Office of Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to implement this vision. The above initiatives are critical to meeting the council's direction and the Region's legislative responsibilities.

51. Can REDI provide 2025 actual spending on REDI-related training, and identify which 2026 training initiatives are essential versus optional?

REDI and Accessibility related training are critical for delivering equitable services that are rooted in culturally safe and trauma informed practices, which align with our Growing with Care priorities, council directives and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. They include key foundational knowledge and legislation (for example, Human Rights, AODA) to reduce risk

and advance the Strategic Plan's "Equitable Services and Opportunities" area of focus.

Reconciliation training for all municipal staff is prioritized and offered continually throughout the year. We partner with local Indigenous organizations, academic institutions and companies that offer an authentic Indigenous-led voice. We offer a variety of formats to reach the widest audience and complement our Days of Significance calendar of events. Examples of upcoming Reconciliation topics for 2026 include Sacred Fires, Indigenous Worldviews, Cultural Appropriation, and Indigenous Protocols, just to name a few.

The training and learning budget for the entire organization is efficiently managed to reduce duplication, support local trainers and remain flexible. Staff seek creative ways to collaborate with departments ensuring responsiveness to emerging training needs. Funding for backfilling of front-line staff remains a challenge in completing training objectives.

REDI training for 2025 is \$149,995 for all staff across the organization.

52. Are there REDI initiatives scheduled for 2026 that could be sequenced over multiple years without impacting core compliance or organizational commitments?

The REDI organizational plan has already been designed with a multi-year pacing strategy (2025-2027) to ensure the REDI team can deliver both legislated accessibility work and foundational REDI commitments within an optimal operating model. The multiyear plan has been phased to balance growth and remove barriers to change. In addition to the REDI organizational plan, the REDI team is implementing the Upstream Funding model, supporting the governance and action tables for CSWP, and Reconciliation Action Partnership.

53. Are there opportunities to collaborate with internal departments or external community partners to deliver REDI outcomes more cost-effectively?

Most of the REDI work is already done in collaboration across departments, which is the most efficient way to action REDI within an organization like ROW. Because the team is small, the function relies heavily on partnerships rather than building new stand-alone initiatives. Examples of existing efficiencies include:

Working with department leadership teams

- Embedding REDI into existing departmental planning, policies and processes (rather than creating new ones)

- Leveraging external expertise or community partners when appropriate rather than developing new internal programs.

Central coordination ensures consistency and prevents departments from duplicating effort or taking on avoidable risk. CSWP collaborations happen through the overall governance structure and action tables with Regional staff, community partners and grassroots organizations to move the work forward. Many community partners, system partners and area municipalities provide in kind support to advance and action the CSWP. For example, the Combating Hate Action Table has 30+ members who collaborated in developing and launching this year's community wide Anti-Hate awareness campaign and website with both in kind and financial contributions.

54. Paramedics received a major investment last year to their budget. What was the percentage increase compared to the previous year?

In 2025, for frontline staffing increases, Paramedic Services received a 4% budget increase (2% on the levy) compared to 2024.

In 2024, Paramedic Services had a more significant budget increase. It was 8.2% on the levy compared to 2023.

The paramedics master plan suggests timing of future investments to match growth and target response rates.

55. Have you considered advertising & sponsorship partnerships - Exploring partnerships for campaigns or public-facing communications.

The Region of Waterloo has a number of services with advertising revenue agreements that support service delivery.

Grand River Transit has a contract with Pattison Outdoor Advertising to manage and administer the GRT advertising program. GRT receives an annual guarantee based on advertising purchased on GRT buses, platforms, stations and shelters. As part of the current transit advertising contract, Pattison has installed 10 digital ad shelters, and the revenue is factored into our current contract. Our annual guarantee for 2026 is \$1.74m in revenue. We are in year 6 of a 10-year contract. Any new additions would be outside of the current contract and require capital investment. It is recommended that this is explored in the next contract.

YKF has also had advertising partnerships, including shared campaigns with airline service partners. Current revenue from the digital advertising boards is very limited. A 2025 RFP inviting advertising companies to submit proposals for a

program at the airport did not result in a successful proponent. Staff are reviewing various options to increase YKF advertising signage in 2026.

The Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum also recently partnered with Food Basics to sponsor an event.

Increasing advertising and sponsorship opportunities corporately would require research and development of a policy to set guidelines and principles, including conflict of interest provisions, to support broader implementation.

56. Have you looked at shared communications with agencies - Joint funding arrangements for campaigns of mutual benefit. (Other Municipalities comes to mind)

The Region of Waterloo has a number of joint funding arrangements for campaigns, most recently through the development of the "We all belong" campaign which included contributions (financial and in-kind) from area municipalities, Conestoga College, and many other community agencies. Another example is the collaboration between the Region and area municipalities during the municipal election which includes the WRVotes Website.

57. Have you considered Digital Asset Monetization - Responsible advertising placements on digital platforms.

The Region has not explored utilizing its digital assets for monetization. Exploring this would require significant research and policy development with council direction.

58. Can staff provide the 2025 actual spending on travel, conferences, and professional development within Communications?

Actual spending year-to-date on travel, conferences and professional development for communications includes \$1,835.40 for training and \$1,273.83 for travel.

59. Provide information on water rates – some background information from consultants that helped shape the rate proposal, with 2 or 3 page summary to share with local municipalities. Share detail on water rates from the study and other information used to estimate wastewater rates.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires our Financial Plans be prepared in accordance with the Financial Plans Regulation (O. Reg 453/07), which requires Council's approval of the Financial Plans by resolution, ensuring the drinking water systems are financially viable for years to come. To create the

Financial Plans, the following information was considered:

- 2025 Water Operating Budget
- 2024 Financial Information Return (FIRs)
- 2025 Capital Reserve Fund opening balances
- 10-year capital plan (2025-2034 inflated annually at 2.9%)
- 5-year historical water consumption with an assumed 1% annual increase moving forward
- No rate funded debt

The full Financial Plans for Water Supply and Water Distribution were provided to Council in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) of the report to Council (in September) entitled: [EES WWO 25-003 Ontario Regulation 453/07 Water Financial Plan](#).

The preparation of Wastewater rates followed a similar rate modeling process as Water rates, except there is no regulatory requirement to submit a Long-Range Financial Plan to the Province. Like with water rates, similar cost inputs/documents and assumptions were used in preparing the 2026 wastewater Budget, except rate funded debt being required to carry out wastewater capital projects. A further review with a consultant will be completed in 2026 to forecast several scenarios for wastewater services.

60. Is there possibility of a shared waste pick-up calendar with Circular Materials?

As of March 2024, the Region of Waterloo (Region) no longer provides residential blue box recycling. The Region has been communicating the shift in blue box responsibility to Circular Materials (CM) since 2023 during in-person engagement, through updates to websites, the Waste Whiz app, and social media, and through customer service interactions.

As previously reported to Council in EES-WMS-25-005, the Region is supporting recycling communications to CM and their contractors until December 31, 2025, as per the promotion and education agreement.

CM required the Region to state its intention to collaborate on the 2026 waste calendar by October 1, 2025. Partnering with CM would require the Region to be responsible for the development, design, printing, and distribution of the waste guides and/or calendars to households, and for providing residents about blue box-related information (for which the Region is no longer responsible for managing), such as:

- the days and times that recycling collection services are provided;
- listings of acceptable and unacceptable Blue Box Material;
- description of how a recycling collection receptacle can be replaced, or how additional recycling collection receptacles can be requested;
- the telephone number and email address of the contractor delivering recycling collection services at which persons may receive responses to questions or concerns relating to recycling collection services; and,
- any other information required by CM, as communicated from time to time, to meet requirements of the Regulation.

Although CM would fund a small portion of the calendar, there would be no compensation provided for the Region's time and resources (e.g. Service First Contact Centre staff) required due to the increase of resident inquiries related to CM's recycling program and their upcoming changes.

The Region declined to partner with CM on the collection calendars as it would add confusion with residents as we prepare to launch the new curbside cart-based collection contract, including the change to a four-day collection schedule. The focus of the 2026 calendar is to provide residents with essential information about carts and their collection day.

The development of the Region's collection calendars for the new cart-based collection contract is well-underway, and although it does not include recycling information, it directs residents to contact CM for information on their recycling program.

61. Additional requests

The following requests would require a motion as significant staff resources and policy work would be required should council wish to pursue them:

- Explore a municipal housing corporation to reprofile the debt.
- From a corporate perspective, are there areas where cross-departmental coordination (e.g., procurement consolidation, shared services, contract alignment) could yield efficiencies in 2026?
- Relating to request #39, "Provide an inventory of all maintenance-related contracts across WRH buildings", outcome to bring forward a plan to bundle maintenance contracts (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, general repairs) for multi-site procurement to achieve better pricing and vendor consistency.
- Relating to request #40, "What capital renewals in Housing Services scheduled for 2026 could safely be re-timed? Outcome to provide a risk-ranked list of 2026 Housing capital items identifying which can be

deferred to 2027–2028 without compromising safety, habitability, or compliance.

- Related to request #41 “Provide a list of the lowest-performing 3–5% of service hours, including ridership data, efficiency ratios, and options to restructure or consolidate these trips without affecting core coverage”
- Relating to # 57 - Have you considered Digital Asset Monetization - Responsible advertising placements on digital platforms.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities: Nil

Public: Nil

7. Financial Implications:

As described in various sections of the report.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Nil

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: 2019-2026 Operating Budget Summary

Appendix B: Council Conference Policy

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