

**Region of Waterloo**  
**Planning, Development, and Legislative Services**  
**Build Waterloo Region**

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**To:** Community and Health Services Committee  
**Meeting Date:** May 5, 2026  
**Report Title:** CYPT and UNICEF Canada –Youth Impact Survey Partnership

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**1. Recommendation**

For information.

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

In May 2026, in partnership with UNICEF Canada, CYPT will launch the 4th survey of youth in Waterloo Region.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

This work aligns with Equitable Services and Opportunities.

**4. Report Highlights:**

- In 2018, UNICEF Canada invited CYPT to partner in developing a child and youth well-being survey. This survey has become known locally as the Youth Impact Survey.
- In 2020, the survey was piloted with about 300 young people in Waterloo region. Since that time, the survey has been delivered by CYPT in 2021, 2023 and is now live for the fourth time in May 2026.
- The May 2026 survey efforts will be mobilized via a team of 17 youth (in compensated roles), the CYPT Backbone staff, and over 100 local organizations connected to the CYPT.
- Top survey incentives for youth are volunteer hours and the chance to win a prize, and to that end, over 50 youth-desired prizes have been acquired to support the effort (including donations from Region of Waterloo-affiliated bodies Grand River Transit, Libraries, Waterloo Region Police Services and Flair Airlines).
- Our goal is to hear from over 2,000 diverse young people age 9-18 across the cities and townships. Hearing from a large number of young people provides greater access to representative, disaggregated data.
- CYPT has worked to develop a 4-step process from survey administration through to action in support of child and youth well-being (see Appendix A). Use of the Youth Impact Survey data has resulted in better-aligned programs and supports for young people, as well as more resources.

## 5. Background:

UNICEF Canada is a nationally-renowned, expert body on child and youth well-being. In 2018 they recognized the need to create a child and youth-informed index of well-being. This index, informed by young people across the Country, became a framework of [9 Domains for Child and Youth Well-being](#). In 2019, the membership of the CYPT adopted this framework when referring to child and youth well-being.

To complement the index, UNICEF Canada initiated the creation of an aligned survey tool that individual communities could use to assess the well-being of their young people across these 9 Domains. They sought out CYPT in Waterloo region as the community to partner with in the creation of the pilot survey tool. Working with the University of Waterloo, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation (as the funder of this work), a survey tool of reliable and validated questions that aligned with what young people said mattered to them was created. In February 2020, almost 100 diverse young people from across Waterloo region gathered in help finalize question wording, create a promotions plan, and named the survey (known since in Waterloo region as the Youth Impact Survey). In July 2020, the survey was piloted by almost 300 young people aged 8-18. Based on the response patterns and feedback from youth, questions were solidified and the surveying age was established as age 9-18.

Since that time, CYPT has run the survey in 2021 and 2023 – hearing from almost 3,000 young people across the community. Examples of how member organizations have used insights from the Youth Impact Survey data include:

- To collectively obtain over \$3 Million in funding investments to support child and youth well-being.
- To align their strategic plans to the needs and desires of young people.
- To make programming more responsive.
- To hold deeper-level conversations with young people about what matters to them.

Furthermore, youth have used the data to drive change as well. For example, 29 groups of youth across the community have pitched ideas for change in the 2024 and 2025 [Youth Impact Projects](#). \$140,000 has been accessed by young people to create Youth Impact Survey-aligned changed for youth, by youth.

CYPT has worked with UNICEF Canada over the years to help refine this unique tool for use across Canada, and to support other communities in their practice of hearing the voices of youth. In addition to Waterloo region, four other communities in Canada have run the survey in their communities, and CYPT has helped mentor and support their efforts. CYPT and UNICEF Canada have also compiled a toolbox of resources to support communities on their journey to hear the voices of youth.

CYPT looks forward to 2026 to hearing first-hand from young people about their well-being and experiences in the community, and then supporting the community in making meaningful use of these important insights.

**6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public**

**Area Municipalities:** Five of the seven Area Municipalities have opted to be Voting Member organizations with the CYPT. They have been directly engaged during all Youth Impact Survey cycle activities.

**Public:** The Youth Impact Survey is always open to, and promoted to, youth across all of Waterloo region. Information on how to get involved is shared via CYPT social media, direct to young people who are connected to CYPT, and direct to the 100+ organizations that are connected with the CYPT.

**7. Financial Implications:**

	Current Year	Future Year(s)
<b>Budget Impact?</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Capital Plan Impact?</b>	No new impact	No new impact

The Youth Impact Survey costs approximately \$200,000 to administer and report on, and in 2026, will be made possible through funding contributions from:

- Astley Family Foundation Region of Waterloo
- Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
- Region of Waterloo
- United Way Waterloo Region Communities
- Waterloo Region Community Foundation

The Region of Waterloo is one of several contributing partners with contributions of \$150,000 of which \$136,000 allocated to the Youth Impact Survey.

**8. Conclusion / Next Steps:**

The 2026 Youth Impact Survey is conducted every three years and is active for the month of May, 2026. The target this year is to hear from at least 2,000 young people from across the three cities and four townships. All organizations connected to the CYPT, as well as members of Council, will receive a promotions package (see Appendix B) to help share about the survey with young people. Data from the 2026

survey will provide an updated account of the well-being of young people in Waterloo region. Partners will be poised to use this data later this year to seek further investments in their programs and to ensure supports are responsive to the state of well-being of youth.

In partnership with UNICEF Canada, we will continue to support other communities in Canada in delivering this survey, and in building out a robust model of data-informed decision making for and with young people.

## **9. Attachments:**

Appendix A: [2026 Youth Impact Survey](#)

Appendix B: 2026 Youth Impact Survey Promotions package

Appendix C: Presentation slides

**Prepared By:** Alison Pearson, Manager, Children and Youth Planning Table

**Reviewed By:** Matthew Chandy, Director, Build Waterloo Region

Lowanna Patterson, Financial Analyst, Corporate Services

**Approved By:** Rod Regier, Commissioner, Planning, Development & Legislative Services