

2023-2027 Strategic Plan

August 15, 2023



Region of Waterloo

Waterloo Region is Growing

What we do now impacts our future



TENTH LARGEST COMMUNITY IN CANADA.

Close to one million people will call Waterloo Region home by 2051.

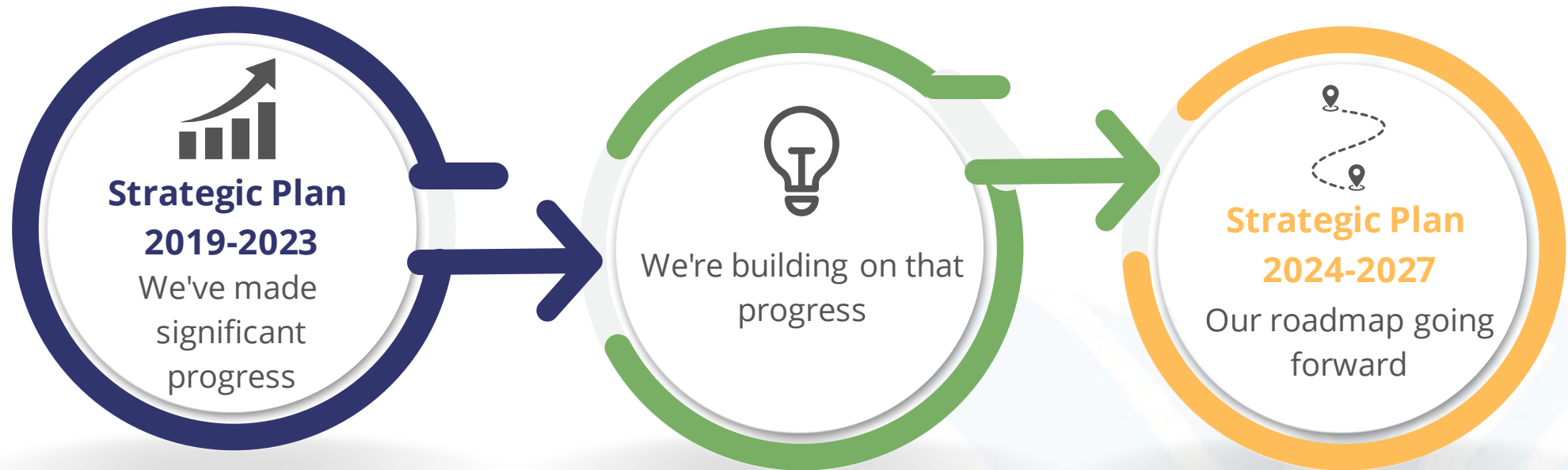


Council's Vision

- Waterloo Region is named the #1 place to live in Canada.
- Waterloo Region meets climate targets and announces carbon zero operations.
- Waterloo Region celebrates the anniversary of poverty eradication, achieves affordable housing for the most vulnerable, and announces the end of chronic homelessness.
- Waterloo Region has implemented a 20 year transit plan and use of cars has diminished.
- Waterloo Region has thriving countrysides, protected farmlands and continues to hold the Countryside Line.
- Waterloo Region has a diversified and thriving economy and attracted new businesses to the region.
- Waterloo Region has examples where the private and public sectors have collaborated to balance economic growth and environmental protections.
- Waterloo Region is a complete community that is inclusive and accessible to all residents.

Strategic Plan

Setting the Direction



Timeline

January – March
Planning and
launch

- Determine project scope, launch and early data collection efforts, through surveys and research.

March – June
Early
engagement

- Engage with Council, CAO, staff and community.

May – July
Sense-making and
strategy design

- Strategy Design, including reflecting on Mission, Vision and Values.

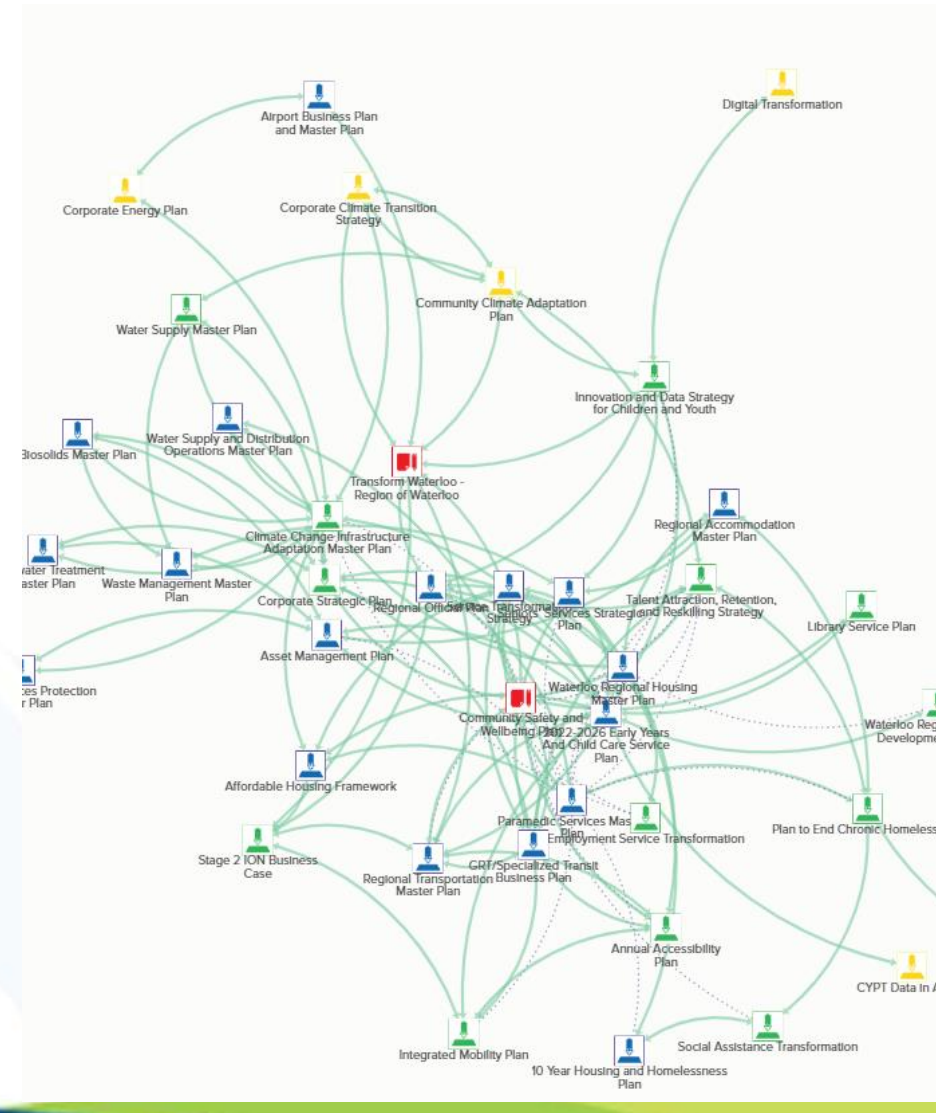
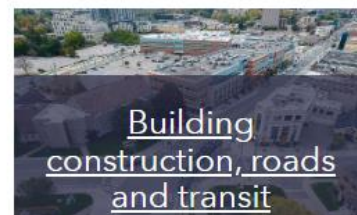
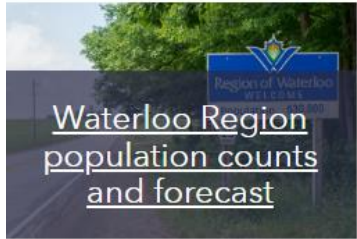
July - August
Approval

- Finalize Strategic Priorities, including Mission, Vision and Values. Receive Council approval.

August - beyond
Launch and
implementation

- New priorities guide the 2024 Plan and Budget.

Community Profile and Strategy Map





Thousands of people participated!

- **5,000** respondents to the Mini Wellbeing Survey;
- **1,000** respondents to the resident telephone survey;
- **1,652** respondents to the 2023 EngageWR Plan and Budget Survey;
- **4** Council workshops held;
- **1,200** community members engaged through **5** workshops, **14** community events and **1** online engagement;
- **1,000+** staff reached through **7** workshops, **18** outreach events and **1** online engagement; and,
- Many more informal presentations to the community and staff.



Future Foresight Methodology



SIGNALS OF CHANGE

Scan a range of sources, staff and stakeholder surveys, and engagement activities to identify hundreds of signals of change that may impact the future of Waterloo Region.



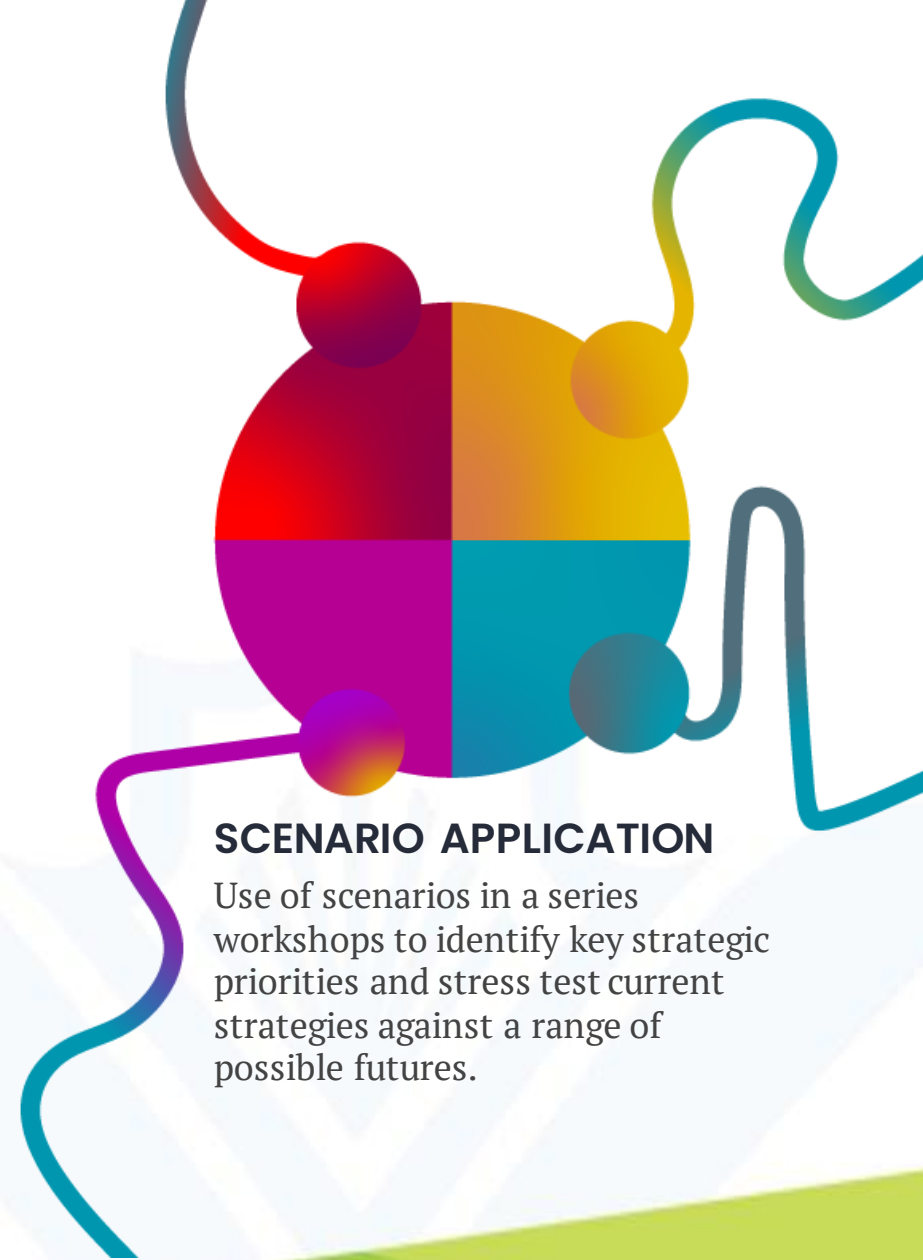
KEY TRENDS

Distillation of signals of change into key social, technology, economic, environmental, political and values trends that might present challenges and opportunities for Waterloo Region.



FUTURE SCENARIOS

Develop 4 possible futures of Waterloo Region in 2050 to spark new thinking about the future.



SCENARIO APPLICATION

Use of scenarios in a series of workshops to identify key strategic priorities and stress test current strategies against a range of possible futures.

Key Trends Impacting Waterloo Region 2023

Refer to pages 22-27 of
the Final Report
(Appendix A)

- Population Boom (p. 22)
- Economically Divided (p. 22)
- Families evolved (p. 23)
- Disrupted municipal finances (p. 23)
- AI government (p. 24)
- Climate-first leadership (p. 24)
- Truth & Reconciliation (p. 25)
- Democracy under pressure (p. 25)
- Food system transformation (p. 26)
- Housing crisis (p. 26)
- Equity and Social Justice (p. 26)
- Mental health emergency (p. 27)



Key Themes

Affordability & Accessibility of Services

Understanding the cost of living challenges facing residents, maintain affordability and expand accessibility of services.

Car-free mobility

Expand and invest in public transit and active transportation to encourage car-free mobility throughout the region.

Liveable & vibrant growth

As the region grows, create higher density neighbourhoods with proximity of services and walkability, while maintaining outdoor and greenspaces, quality of life and agricultural land.

Safe & equitable communities

Continue to focus on reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion to enable strong community connections and trust amongst neighbours.

Economic growth & equitable prosperity

Enable a thriving, diversified economy with employment land, talent attraction, and many job opportunities for residents in the region.

Climate focused decisions & actions

Foster a culture of climate-first policy decisions, applying a climate-lens to service delivery.

Meaningful public engagement

Enable residents to be active decision-makers, shifting power to communities, and centring voices of those most impacted by discrimination.

Thriving Countrysides

Enhance service delivery in townships, support local food system development and protection of agricultural lands.

Health & wellbeing

Support the physical and mental health of residents, with a focus on social determinants of health and health equity.

A municipality fit for the future

Experiment with innovative partnerships & service delivery solutions, to enhance fiscal resilience, future proof governance, & increase staff wellbeing.



Strategic

Plan

2023-2027



VISION

OUR VISION FOR WATERLOO REGION IS:

A compassionate community that cares for all people, stewards the land for future generations and where everyone has the opportunity to live a good life.



MISSION

OUR MISSION AS THE REGION OF WATERLOO IS:

Bringing life's essentials to every single person in Waterloo Region.



VALUES

OUR CORE VALUE IS:

Care for people and the land we share.

In Waterloo Region, we are part of the Dish with One Spoon wampum: we recognize our shared humanity and land; we only take what we need; we leave some for others; and we keep the dish clean. This commitment is the foundation on which our core value and behaviours are built.

Behaviours:

- Advance justice: Advance reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion through all of our work.
- Be compassionate: Act with respect and compassion always.
- Be collaborative: Collaborate with each other and the community, because we cannot do our work alone.
- Be accountable: Insist on integrity, accountability, and openness at all times for ourselves and others.
- Be experimental: Be a safe space for bold new ideas, to experiment and make mistakes - this how we learn and achieve the greatest impact.
- Be responsible stewards: Recognize that community building requires investment and we cannot stretch beyond our means. Making tough choices and finding new ways of working will move us forward together.



Vision Statement:

A compassionate community that cares for all people, stewards the land for future generations and where everyone has the opportunity to live a good life.

Waterloo Region is a place of possibilities.

Situated on the Dish with One Spoon treaty land, rich in Indigenous cultures for over 10,000 years, it is a community committed to Reconciliation. It is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral Peoples, whose enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge is deeply respected and underpins the way we steward the land for future generations.

Waterloo Region is a place of hope, for today's residents and for those travelling from all corners to seek a better life. Our appreciation for land coupled with our welcoming nature helped create thriving cities and vibrant townships that together provide a unique way of life for those who call Waterloo Region their home.

Ours is a community of collaborators, where people love to listen and learn from one another. Here, we take bold action towards the things that matter most. Invention and ambition is in our DNA and together collaborators and disrupters tackle local challenges and further global progress.

We have gratitude for our abundant local food, which blend with global food cultures to nourish and bring joy to friends, neighbours, visitors and families in all their forms.

Most importantly of all, Waterloo Region is a caring community, a place of safety, where you are valued for who you are. Your voice and action will matter as we weather all the storms together, making sure no one is left behind. Join us on this journey; you have a home here in Waterloo Region.



Mission Statement:

Bringing life's essentials to every single person in Waterloo Region.

At the heart of the Region of Waterloo are people who care deeply about the community. Together we collaborate with community to bring life's essentials to everyone living, working and visiting here, today and tomorrow.

You will find us providing health services, transit services, seniors' services, paramedic services, waste management services and much more.

And behind each service, is a passionate and compassionate employee working towards an inclusive, thriving and sustainable future for Waterloo Region.



Values and Behaviours:

Care for people and the land we share.

In Waterloo Region, we are part of the Dish with One Spoon wampum: we recognize our shared humanity and land; we only take what we need; we leave some for others; and we keep the dish clean. This commitment is the foundation on which our core value and behaviours are built.

Behaviours:

- **Advance justice:** Advance reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion through all of our work.
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Priorities and Objectives

Strategic Plan
2023-2027

Our Vision:

A compassionate community that cares for all people, stewards the land for future generations and where everyone has the opportunity to live a good life.

HOMES FOR ALL

We will invest in affordable homes and economic opportunity for all that are part of inclusive and environmentally sustainable communities.

- Move quickly to create affordable, accessible, and equitable housing
- Eliminate chronic homelessness and reliance on traditional shelter models
- Invest in upstream solutions to reduce housing and economic precarity
- Unlock land that supports community growth



CLIMATE ALIGNED GROWTH

As we grow, we will support a healthy environment where communities can thrive. Through intentional collaboration and creativity, we will support sustainable community growth.

- Use a climate adaptation lens to re-imagine infrastructure, land and services for growth
- Foster car-alternative options
- Steward our natural environment and shared resources as we grow

EQUITABLE SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through collaboration and innovative design, we will provide equitable, accessible services across Waterloo Region that support the social determinants of health and complete communities as we grow.

- Ensure services are inclusive, accessible, culturally safe and appropriate
- Design equitable regional services that meet local community needs
- Explore new models of service through community collaboration and partnerships



GROWING WITH CARE

RESILIENT AND FUTURE READY ORGANIZATION

The Region of Waterloo is a great place to work, where everyone is valued, feels they belong and where they have the supports and tools they need to do a great job. We will be prepared for the future by providing a safe space for bold ideas and experimentation that transform services based on data and other ways of knowing.

- Foster an empowered, people-centred culture
- Reconcile past injustices to advance our future together
- Explore new service models and partnerships to achieve fiscal resilience and better service





HOMES FOR ALL

We will invest in affordable homes and economic opportunity for all that are part of inclusive and environmentally sustainable communities.

To advance this outcome, over the next four years we will:

1. **Move quickly to create affordable, accessible, and equitable housing:** We will increase equitable access to affordable homes that costs less than 30% of household income across the region. We will also work to ensure these homes reflect the present and future needs of residents, with a variety of options across the region.
2. **Eliminate chronic homelessness and reliance on traditional emergency shelter models:** We will work in collaboration with area municipalities, community partners, and other levels of government to reduce, then eliminate chronic homelessness by advancing new long-term housing solutions that enable people to have safe, permanent homes.
3. **Invest in upstream solutions to reduce housing and economic precarity:** To adequately address the complexity of the housing crisis for current and future generations, we will extend our focus beyond the traditional domain of housing solutions, and focus on preventative interventions and continue to deliver wrap-around supports.
1. **Unlock land that supports community growth:** We will make land available across the region appropriate for affordable housing, shovel-ready employment lands and other supportive infrastructure designed for families and future needs.



CLIMATE-ALIGNED GROWTH

As we grow, we will support a healthy environment where communities can thrive. Through intentional collaboration and creativity, we will support sustainable community growth.

To advance this outcome, over the next four years we will:

- 1. Use a climate adaption lens to re-imagine infrastructure, land and services for growth:** Using a climate mitigation and adaptation lens, we will work collaboratively with TransformWR, area municipalities, businesses and community partners to integrate infrastructure planning and adaptation.
- 2. Foster car-alternative options:** By expanding equitable public and active transportation networks across the region, we will make it easier for people to get around and make climate-friendly choices.
- 3. Steward our natural environment and shared resources as we grow:** We will work to protect the region's natural environment, biodiversity, trees, and water.



EQUITABLE SERVICES & OPPORTUNITIES

Through collaboration and innovative design, we will provide equitable, accessible services across Waterloo Region that support the social determinants of health and complete communities as we grow.

To advance this outcome, over the next four years we will:

- 1. Ensure services are inclusive, accessible, culturally safe and appropriate:** The Region will work to ensure the services it delivers are safe, culturally appropriate, inclusive and empowering to communities.
- 2. Design equitable regional services that meet local community needs:** We will work to ensure people have access to the services they need when, where, and how they need them most.
- 3. Explore new models of service through community collaboration and partnerships:** To best meet people's needs, we will work with community partners, community members, and across Regional departments to co-design safe, fiscally responsible and culturally appropriate service improvements and policies.





RESILIENT & FUTURE READY ORGANIZATION

The Region of Waterloo is a great place to work, where everyone is valued, feels they belong and where they have the supports and tools they need to do a great job. We will be prepared for the future by providing a safe space for bold ideas and experimentation that transform services based on data and other ways of knowing.

To advance this outcome, over the next four years we will:

1. **Foster an empowered, people-centred culture:** Our people are critical to enabling the delivery of our services. We will work to ensure present and future staff feel valued, respected, and have the tools, support, processes and agency they need to make a positive impact.
2. **Reconcile past injustices to advance our future together:** To meaningfully advance our future, we must acknowledge and learn from our past injustices, and act. This includes centering the voices of those traditionally discriminated against in policy decisions, staffing decisions and service delivery. It also means exploring new approaches to community-centred decision-making, and how we attract, value, and support Indigenous, Black and racialized communities.
3. **Explore new service models and partnerships to achieve fiscal resilience and better service:** Working together, we will identify and invest in new approaches that support our future fiscal resilience. We will support staff and the community to drive service transformation that is culturally appropriate, safe and inclusive through co-design, data-driven decision-making, innovative digital tools, and other ways of knowing

WHAT'S NEXT

Implementing and Evaluating our Strategic Plan

