1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

2. DELEGATIONS

3. PRESENTATIONS
   a) Jennifer McConkey, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation re: MPAC update

4. REPORTS – Chief Administrative Officer
   a) CA-11-002.1, 2010 Internal Audit Report
   b) CA-11-003, Citizen Input and Engagement in the 2011-2014 Strategic Planning Process

REPORTS – Finance
   c) F-11-013, Grant Application to Fund Regional Development Charges - Habitat for Humanity

REPORTS – Corporate Resources
   d) CR-FM-11-005, Allocation of 2010 Corporate Sustainability Fund
   e) CR-FM-11-006, Update on FCM Partners for Climate Protection Program
   f) CR-RS-11-015, Surplus Declaration and Conveyance Adjacent to Columbia Street, City of Waterloo to the Corporation of the City of Waterloo

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
   g) Minutes of the Audit Committee – February 14, 2011

5. INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE
6. OTHER BUSINESS
a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking Sheet

7. NEXT MEETING – April 12, 2011

8. ADJOURN
TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration & Finance Committee

DATE: March 8, 2011

FILE CODE: A35-01

SUBJECT: 2010 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

SUMMARY:

Nil.

REPORT:

Background:
A system of internal controls assists management staff in meeting their responsibilities for the efficient and effective operation of an organization. A well managed control function is dependent upon many factors including organizational processes established to ensure that program objectives are met, clearly defined management responsibilities, external audits of financial information and systems, and internal audits of programs, systems, and processes. In order to ensure an effective control function these components must work in a constructive and mutually supportive manner.

Internal Audit is one key element in a system of internal controls that are part of the Region's management practices. Internal Audit provides an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity that, together with management practices and external audits, ensures that programs and services are delivered efficiently, effectively, and in compliance with internal policies and external regulations.

In 2010, Internal Audit's activities included administrative and organizational tasks, compliance audits, control consultations, and program reviews. Activities in each of these categories are briefly described below. In addition to the summary of work activities for 2010 a preliminary work plan for 2011 is contained in this report.

This report was reviewed and discussed by the Audit Committee on February 14, 2011 and is now presented to Administration & Finance Committee for information.

Administrative and Organizational:
In June 2010, the Manager, Internal Audit (Joyce Matthison) retired from the Region of Waterloo. Joyce was the Region of Waterloo’s Internal Auditor from 2005-2010, responsible for leading the Internal Audit function. In addition, she was instrumental in establishing the program review framework and methodology as well as leading all of the program reviews. The Manager, Internal Audit role was advertised both internal and external to the Region of Waterloo and
received significant applicant response. The successful candidate (David Young) was hired and started in September of 2010.

The Internal Audit Resource Group (IARG) provides input and feedback on Internal Audit initiatives and the efficacy of the Internal Audit program. IARG supports Internal Audit in ensuring that an effective control function exists at the Region. The Internal Auditor, the Commissioner of Human Resources, the Director of Financial Services & Development Finance, and the Regional Solicitor are permanent members of the group. Representation from all other Departments is supplied by Directors from Social Services, Public Health, Corporate Resources, Planning, Housing, & Community Services, and Transportation & Environmental Services. The Internal Audit Resource Group met twice in 2010. IARG reviewed the results of the petty cash and purchase card audits and provided input into the recommendations for the selection of program review areas and the Internal Audit work plan for 2010. The Manager, Internal Audit provided IARG with an overview of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) along with the benefits associated with implementing this type of framework. IARG provided input and feedback on the ERM framework initiative.

Compliance Audits:
Three compliance audits were conducted in 2010. As in previous years, both petty cash and purchase card procedures and accounts were tested and evaluated for compliance with Policy. In addition, a compliance review of the Ontario Bus Replacement Program (OBRP) was performed in 2010.

The petty cash audit resulted in suggestions for improvement with regard to operational best practices and procedures. Compliance was good, however, we did find that a few of the petty cash funds were operating primarily as floats and/or using petty cash for purposes that it was not intended to serve.

Finance has taken steps to ensure that any petty cash funds operating as floats will have the amount of the petty cash fund adjusted and recorded accordingly in the general ledger. Internal documentation of the custodians responsible for any new floats will also be updated. Finance has indicated the business practices documented in the 2010 Petty Cash Report will be discussed with the departments in question and a separate process established to facilitate their needs.

Compliance with the purchase card policy was also good and appropriate control procedures are in place to mitigate risk. The review of purchase card activity resulted in recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Region’s program policies, review procedures and administrative duties. Specifically, continuation of the previously recommended in-house training program (Finance 101) is noted again. The program provides a broad scope of training on various Finance related activities, including P-card best practices and policy review. In addition, we have recommended updates to specific areas of the policy, where there appears to be gaps in understanding, and notification of these changes are to be forwarded to appropriate members of senior management for their dissemination. The recommendations are currently under review by the Finance department.

The OBRP review showed that the Region has appropriate documentation and standards in place to meet the performance criteria as outlined in the provincial OBRP program. No issues were noted.

Going forward into 2011, we anticipate doing the purchase card and petty cash reviews once again. However, the OBRP review will not be part of the 2011 plan, as the province has
cancelled the program. The petty cash and purchase card reviews will be subject to a more strategic focus in 2011, reflecting perceived areas of higher risk. That is, we will be looking at a sample of transactions from an exception point of view, using common filters to flag transactions outside of the norm. This approach ensures that our resources are being utilized appropriately and that the reviews provide as much value-add as possible.

Control Consultation and Investigations:
Internal Audit’s role, in addition to that of compliance, can include consulting engagements. Consulting engagements allow internal auditors to play more of an advisory role than traditional compliance engagements, whose primary purpose is to provide an opinion on whether or not organizations goals are being accomplished using an agreed upon set of standards. This is also referred to as an “assurance engagement”. Consulting engagements are advisory roles and can also include, counsel, facilitation and training. The caveat for doing these types of engagements is to ensure that the Internal Audit function remains independent of management functions. That is, while advice and recommendations of possible appropriate actions are given by Internal Audit, implementation is performed by management.

Beginning in 2009 and into 2010, Internal Audit completed a consulting engagement with Children’s Services to assist in the development of a review program to validate claims made by the 3rd party child care operators, with whom the Region contracts. The review programs were completed in 2010 and have been forwarded to Children’s Services for use in their accountability reviews going forward. Concurrent with this, Internal Audit and the external accounting firm, KPMG, performed an investigation to evaluate internal controls and compliance with the Region’s wage subsidy guidelines. The investigation was successful in highlighting areas of risk and the need for strengthened oversight mechanisms.

Program Reviews:
Program reviews provide an objective evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the program under review and an assessment as to the identification and management of risk. In this case, risk means the things that could potentially prevent the program from achieving program goals.

A program review attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Are appropriate results being achieved? Is this an effective program?
2. Are we achieving results in an efficient manner? Are we getting good value for the money invested?
3. Are the associated risks managed effectively? Is there a process in place to identify risks and are there control systems and processes in place to assist us in mitigating risks in an efficient manner?

In 2010, program reviews were completed in two areas – Information Technology Services (ITS) and External Communications. As well, the Facilities - Maintenance and Operations Program Review started in 2010 and is nearing completion. Reports outlining the results of the Information Technology Services Program Review and External Communications Program Review, together with high level plans for implementing the recommendations were provided to Audit Committee in June 2010. Reporting on the Facilities Maintenance & Operations Program review should be ready in spring of 2011.

Brief summaries of the 2010-2011 program reviews are provided below. The findings of the ITS review are described in more detail in Report CA-10-004/CR-IT-10-001. The findings of the External Communications Program Review are described in more detail in Report CA-10-005. Both reports were presented to Audit Committee in June 2010. The Facilities - Maintenance and
Operations Program Review is currently in the analysis and report-development stage. The report, barring unforeseen issues, should be ready to present to Audit Committee in spring of 2011.

1. **External Communications**
   The results of the review indicated that, Corporate Communications and the staff involved in external communications prepare and execute external communications using sound communications principles, processes, and practices.

   The Region is well-positioned to build on its communications successes and improve its effectiveness by providing more strategic and proactive external communications rather than tactical and reactive messages. Corporate Communications is developing an annual Regional Communications Strategy and Plan. This plan will proactively identify, analyze and define Regional communications needs, issues and priorities and allocate resources accordingly.

   The results of the review indicated that the current decentralized model needs to better clarify and formalize the roles of both Corporate Communications and the divisional communicators in order to maintain and improve external communications. A policy framework will be prepared, which will clearly and formally spell out Corporate Communication’s mandate, key organization role(s) and important responsibilities within the organization’s structure and culture.

   Staffing levels within Corporate Communications are relatively low relative to other upper tier municipalities even when accounting for the variation in structures ranging from highly centralized to highly decentralized models. Incrementally, (over 2010 and 2011), Corporate Communications proposes to add two additional Corporate Communications staff resources via a minor reorganization of the CAO’s Office and through the budget process. This will allow for Corporate Communications to meet existing and anticipated strategic communications demands.

2. **Information Technology Services (ITS)**
   The results of the review indicated that the need to maximize the use of technology and support effective decision making is crucial to program delivery. The ITS (Information Technology Services) Division is seen as a responsive service provider of technology solutions within the parameters of its current funding and resources. The ITS Division is a competent provider of technical support services. While this model has served the Region well in the past, the recommendations pointed to the need for a fundamental change in how the Region manages technology to capitalize on opportunities and insure responsive and value-driven ITS services into the future. The major recommendations of the review are included below:

   - Implement a corporately accepted technology governance framework empowered to set project investment priorities and funding strategies, identify opportunities to leverage existing investments in technology, avoid buying into duplicate solutions, and facilitate a balanced investment strategy through which all Regional departments will benefit. An ITS project team has been established to develop this new IT business model.
   - Clarify the ITS Division mandate, policies and procedures.
   - Adopt a new organization structure more appropriately suited to lead the organization in future technology initiatives and the sustainability of existing solutions.
   - Work with Human Resources to implement a leadership capacity building program that will identify management and staff whose roles and skills are critical to the Division.
• Establish a forum and processes to educate directors and managers in the principles and responsibilities of all stakeholders related to technology implementation. A corporate technology education program will be developed once the new IT Business Model is completed so that the program will properly reflect the changes being made.

• Adopt a three year strategic technology planning framework to guide acquisitions, enhancement, priorities, and architectural decisions in conjunction with the Region’s program managers.

If comprehensively implemented, the changes would result in: more proactive ITS leadership; more effective management of technology resources organization-wide; services more directly responsive to business needs; longer range technology planning; systems and solutions that are strategically aligned, integrated and leveraged to maximize benefit and minimize duplication and cost.

3. Facilities – Maintenance and Operations (FMO)

The Facilities - Maintenance and Operations Program Review focuses on delivery of FMO services including structures and administrative processes required to provide an effective and efficient maintenance and operations program for all Regional facilities. As a part of the program review, the ownership model and mandate is being reviewed. Early indicators suggest that changes to the service model and asset management strategy are required. Also, there needs to be better use of technology within FMO. As noted these are preliminary findings. A complete discussion of the review with recommendations will be presented in the spring of 2011.

Proposed Activities for 2011:
Activities outlined in the plan for 2011 will include most or all of the following:

- Completion of and reporting on the Facilities – Maintenance and Operations Program Review
- Program review of Region of Waterloo International Airport
- Program review of Rent Supplement Program
- Audit of purchase card use
- Audit of petty cash
- Consult and monitor results of Children’s Services, “accountability reviews”
  - Advise Children’s Services regarding the two on-site reviews to be performed
  - Monitor the outcomes of the reviews
- Development and testing of internal control education project
  Prepare educational material for presentation with I ARG – 5 main control issues to consider when developing and implementing processes and procedures
- Cash controls project:
  Identification and documentation of current procedures together with identification of control weaknesses
- Develop an Enterprise Risk Management Plan

In addition to these items ad hoc consultation and review assignments will be accommodated as the need arises and as circumstances change.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Focus Area 6: Ensure all Regional programs and services are responsive, efficient, effective and accountable to the public.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Nil.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE: Nil.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PREPARED BY: David A. Young, Internal Auditor

APPROVED BY: Michael L. Murray, Chief Administrative Officer
REPORT:

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Region of Waterloo engages in a strategic planning process for every term of Council to identify priorities for the next four years, and to ensure the Region is dealing with the most pressing issues in the community. It also provides a focus for the organization and ensures that there is a common direction over the next four years for Council and staff.

In order to ensure that the Region’s Strategic Plan reflects the most pressing priorities of our community and to provide input to a number of Regional initiatives, Regional staff collected community input using several methods between November 2010 and February 2011 (Phase 1) and will continue to collect input throughout March and April 2011 (Phase 2).

This input has been termed consultation and engagement as the purpose of the process is two-fold:

First, the consultation was specifically designed to gather public input on:

- What is liked best and least about Waterloo Region?
- Experience and satisfaction with Region of Waterloo services (barriers and suggestions).
- Communication and engagement preferences.
- Suggestions to boost trust and confidence in government.
- Community priorities for the next 4 years.

Secondly, the consultation was designed to be interactive and:

- Engage the community.
- Create awareness about the Region of Waterloo services and programs.
- Speak with diverse communities to understand changing needs.
- Create the opportunity for more in-depth conversations and probe questions that were posed in the quantifiable, statistically reliable telephone survey.
- Gather input from groups that may not typically participate in a consultation process.
• Provide information for other Region of Waterloo initiatives, e.g., Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Service Strategy, Communications Strategy, etc.

2.0 PUBLIC INPUT METHODOLOGY

The Region implemented both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to obtain a balance of in-depth as well as quantifiable information. The methods to gather public input included:

Quantitative Method
• A statistically valid, random telephone survey with 1,160 residents. This survey was conducted by ERIN Research.

Qualitative Methods
• Focus groups with a variety of stakeholder groups
• On-line/paper survey.

There are two phases to the engagement and consultation process for the Region’s strategic planning process. Phase 1 is more broad-based and focuses on gathering information regarding priorities from the public and staff. This phase provides input to Council regarding high level priorities for the future. Phase 1 took place between November 2010 and February 15, 2011.

Phase 2 is to delve deeper and will validate and/or refine the themes generated in Phase 1. Phase 2 will also help to identify more specific objectives and actions in order to achieve the high level priorities identified in Phase 1. Phase 2 of the consultation will take place from March to May 2011 following Council’s identification of high level priorities during their February 18, 2011 strategic planning session.

2.1 Quantitative Method - Telephone Survey

ERIN Research conducted the telephone survey of 1,160 residents between November 3 and December 7, 2010. A survey of this size has a margin of error of ±2.9%, 19 times out of 20, using the standard statistical assumptions. The survey tool was pre-tested on a small sample of Waterloo Region residents to ensure clarity and comprehension of the questionnaire. The main sample was drawn at random from a database of listed telephone numbers.

ERIN Research is a national research firm that has an established track record in citizen/customer satisfaction research. ERIN has been instrumental in helping organizations measure performance, satisfaction and trust in Government. They have worked with many municipalities in Canada, including City of Vancouver, City of Winnipeg, City of Toronto, Region of Peel, Halton Region, York Region, City of Ottawa, City of Montreal, Quebec City, and City of Halifax. Their work has helped municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments across Canada improve service delivery, and has also become a model for other governments around the world, including the UK, New Zealand and Australia.

2.2 Qualitative Methods - Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with a variety of groups between November 2010 and February 2011. Efforts were made to host sessions and recruit participants from diverse groups in the community especially as they relate to the trends, issues and forecasts for our community. For example, because our population is aging and growing more ethnically diverse, specific efforts to engage seniors and ethnic populations were implemented. Also, in order to ensure that we heard from all members of our community, we specifically held focus groups with people who may not typically
participate without targeted outreach. For example, focus groups were held with post-secondary students, people living with disabilities, people living on a low income and grade 9 and 10 students. These qualitative methods were also implemented in order to allow for more in-depth discussion and provided the opportunity to probe on questions that were included in the statistically reliable telephone survey. A background document describing the context and questions was distributed in advance to the participants. For a detailed list of focus groups see Appendix B.

A total of 18 focus groups were conducted between November 2010 and February 2011. Ten of the groups were moderated by an external consultant, and eight others were moderated by Region of Waterloo staff. Sessions ranged in length from one to two hours depending on the wishes of the group.

2.3 Qualitative Methods - Online/Paper Survey

An online survey which contained both qualitative and quantitative questions was developed and available to members of the public from December 1, 2010 to February 15, 2011. The survey was promoted at various meetings and events, and was also promoted through Face Book, Twitter as well as in the winter edition of Region News. In order to promote the survey, staff approached community groups and attended meetings to explain the purpose of the consultation and provided instructions of where to find the survey. A paper version of this survey was also developed and offered to the public for those without computer access. This survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Individual answers were anonymous as no identifying information was collected. Participants could skip any question they did not wish to answer. A total of 489 people have participated in this survey to-date.

3.0 PUBLIC INPUT RESULTS

The public provided a wealth of information which will inform the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan priorities, departmental strategic plans, as well as other key Region of Waterloo initiatives such as the diversity and inclusion strategy, service strategy and communication improvements. It is important to note that the findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods are overall fairly consistent with one another and both provide useful information for various aspects of the planning process.

3.1 Telephone Survey Results

The key components of the 2011 telephone survey dealt with:

- Quality of life
- Issues related to the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan, including:
  - Management of growth
  - Management of the environment
  - Transportation
  - Social issues and well-being
- Trust in government
- Service quality
- Drivers of satisfaction with service delivery
- Priorities for improvement.

A summary report of the survey results is included in Appendix A. A copy of the full survey report is available on the Region’s website.
Overall, the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction with Regional programs and services. The results also indicate a number of areas where residents are less satisfied, and identify a number of priorities for the Region to focus on over the next four years.
Some of the significant findings and highlights include the following:

1) Ratings of satisfaction with ten major services produced high ratings. As noted in Figure 1, these include 8.7 out of 10 for ambulance and paramedic services, 8.3 for garbage and recycling, 7.1 for public transit, and 6.0 for road maintenance. Also, as noted on Figure 1, each of these is as good as, or better than, the results from a recent national survey (Citizens First 5, 2008).

![Figure 1. National comparisons with Region of Waterloo results](image)

2) Residents generally believe that this is a safe community. As noted in Figure 2, compared to the 2007 survey, fewer people believe that crime has increased and more people believe that the crime rate has stayed the same.

![Figure 2. “In the last five years do you think that crime in your immediate neighbourhood has increased, stayed the same, or decreased?”](image)
3) Residents believe that the quality of life in Waterloo Region is improving. As noted in Figure 3, compared to 2007, more people say that the quality of life has improved, and fewer say it has declined.

**Figure 3.** “Over the past few years, would you say that the quality of life in Waterloo Region has improved, stayed the same or declined?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of respondents</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed the same</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4) “I get good value for my Regional tax dollars” rated 6.4 out of 10. This is well above the national figure of 3.6 for all governments from Citizens First 5 (2008).

5) A number of the questions on the 2010 survey were repeated verbatim from a similar survey conducted in 2007. On all of these questions, the results either stayed the same or improved, as summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2007 Result (out of 10)</th>
<th>2010 Result (out of 10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like living in a growing community</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's easy to get around Waterloo Region by car</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Region does a good job keeping residents informed</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel involved in decisions that affect me as a resident</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) Residents were asked two open-ended questions:

- What are the two best things about living in Waterloo Region? and
- What two priorities do you think Regional government should focus on over the next four years?

The 10 most frequently identified “Priorities for improvement” over the next 4 years are as follows (with % of respondents identifying that priority in brackets):

- Infrastructure/road planning/roundabouts (9%)
- Existing GRT/Mobility Plus (9%)
- Congestion/traffic (9%)
- Growth/loss of farmland (7%)
- Tax control (7%)
- Poverty (6%)
- Economic development, job creation (5%)
- Access to GTA/other major cities (5%)
- Rapid Transit proposal (4)
- Road maintenance/potholes/snow removal (4%).

7) Comparing the open-ended positive comments to priorities for improvement highlights a number of interesting themes:

- Economic development and job creation is the most frequent theme (by a small margin); comments are positive by a margin of 2 to 1;
- Crime/safety is the second most frequent theme, and positive comments (e.g. that the Region is safe) outnumber negative comments (e.g. about crime) by 6 to 1;
- Growth drew equal numbers of positive comments (e.g. that the community is the right size, has a good mix of land uses) and negative comments (e.g. disappearing farmland, sprawl);
- Among the priorities for improvement, five relate to transportation: traffic congestion; road planning/roundabouts; public transit; the Rapid Transit proposal and road maintenance. Together, these account for 35% of all the “priority” comments making “getting around” the single biggest issue on residents’ minds.

3.2 Qualitative Results

Preliminary results regarding what citizens like best and least about Waterloo Region and what they feel are the pressing priorities are reported together for both the online survey and focus groups (See Appendix B: Public Input for the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan – Qualitative Results from Phase 1). More detailed analysis on the complete set of questions will follow in Phase 2 of the consultation process which includes information on how to make Regional services more inclusive as well as how to improve programs and services.

Overall results indicate that people like living in Waterloo Region. They believe it is a safe community, which has a small town feel with big city advantages. The location of Waterloo Region and the blend and close proximity of rural and urban areas and even the Region’s geographical location in relation to other city centres such as Toronto, received considerable positive praise. Being home to two reputable universities and a college was something residents often liked best about living here. Many felt the universities and the technology sector help create an innovative and forward thinking community while at the same time helping the economy.

Like any other growing community, Waterloo Region has its challenges including traffic, managing growth, poverty, the environment, as well as ensuring the services that are provided by the Region meet the growing demands of the population. Although many people cited that they like the sense of community and felt like they were connected to others in their neighbourhoods, others cited that this was not the case. This was especially noted in more vulnerable groups such as people who were living in poverty and immigrants/refugees.

When asked to describe the most pressing priorities for Waterloo Region, the following were the key themes that emerged from the both the focus group sessions as well as the on-line/paper survey. The major themes cited are as follows:

- Getting around the Region – Transportation
- Eliminating poverty
- Creating more & better affordable housing
- Managing growth
- Supporting arts and culture
- Promoting active lifestyles
Improving services for children, youth and families
Improving services for seniors
Increasing inclusion and promoting diversity
Improving communication and engagement

The qualitative and quantitative results are very similar in the themes that were identified by the public. Transportation was the single highest ranked priority identified across all methods of research and all groups. There are however some slight differences in the rank order of priorities between the methods and this could be due to the specific outreach efforts made to vulnerable groups through the qualitative methods as mentioned in section 2.2. For example eliminating poverty was ranked as the second highest priority in the qualitative methods, compared to the 6th highest priority in the telephone survey.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

Based on this public input, Regional Council identified initial priorities at their session on February 18, 2011. Based on Council’s identified priorities, Regional staff will identify more specific objectives and actions to achieve these priorities.

Phase 2 of the community input process will then be implemented in order to review the priorities identified by Council and to seek input on the proposed objectives and actions. These mechanisms may include a community leader forum, a web-based survey for the public to provide feedback and focus group sessions with the public and staff. These events will occur between March and May, 2011. The feedback collected from Phase 2 of the community and staff input process will be compiled and presented to Council, in order for Council to refine the strategic objectives and actions before finalizing the Strategic Plan. Once Council has finalized the Plan, each Department will develop a Departmental Strategic Plan which will align with and add further detail to the Corporate Strategic Plan. Council can anticipate further reports detailing progress in the future months.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The corporate strategic planning process identified in this report provides a framework to ensure effective and efficient governance which recognizes and responds to the needs of the community through the priorities identified by Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The financial implications of the Strategic Plan actions are addressed during the normal budget process and in individual program budgets.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

All Regional Departments will continue to be involved in the development and implementation of the Region’s Strategic Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A. ERIN Telephone Survey Summary – Citizen Priorities, Satisfaction, Trust
Appendix B. Public Input for the 2011-2014 Strategic Plan – Qualitative Results from Phase 1

PREPARED BY: Lorie Fioze, Manager, Strategic Planning and Strategic Initiatives
Citizen Priorities, Satisfaction, Trust
Summary Report
For the Region of Waterloo
By ERIN Research Inc.
February 16, 2011
Citizen Priorities, Satisfaction, Trust
Summary Report by ERIN Research Inc.
Spring 2011

Prepared by
George Spears Ph.D.
Kasia Seydegart MSW
Pat Zulinov CMRP

Cover: Main Street Bridge, Cambridge, ON. ‘KNIT CamBRIDGE’ was a large scale, collaborative piece of outdoor public art conceived and coordinated by Sue Sturdy, Artist-in-Residence at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts. Citizens from Waterloo region and beyond contributed their knitting to dress the bridge with creations of yarn. The knitting was then designed into blankets and scarves and raised funds for local charities, 2010.

Photo: Laurie Hornell

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1 Introduction

INTRODUCTION

As the Region of Waterloo embarks on a new four-year Strategic Plan cycle for 2011-2014, a survey of residents was undertaken by ERIN Research Inc. to assess perceptions of the Region’s current level of performance and to identify priorities for the coming years.

This summary report presents highlights of the survey results. The full report, Citizen Priorities, Satisfaction, Trust, 2011, is available under separate cover.

BACKGROUND

The Region of Waterloo serves the diverse needs of more than 500,000 constituents across a large urban and rural area. Services provided by the Region of Waterloo have evolved and expanded considerably in recent years, touching the lives of every citizen.

The Region is now responsible for public health, social services, region-wide planning, heritage, rural libraries, major transportation routes, regional airport, water supply, sewage treatment, solid waste disposal, recycling, ambulance service, the Provincial Offences Courts, public transit, police and emergency planning.

This expansion in services, along with the continuing growth of the Region, underlines the need to understand citizens’ priorities.

METHOD

ERIN Research conducted a scientifically rigorous telephone survey of 1,160 Waterloo Region residents during November-December 2010. A survey of this size has a margin of error of ±2.9%, 19 times out of 20, using the standard statistical assumptions.

The raw sample closely approximates the demographic profile of adult residents of Waterloo Region. It was weighted on three dimensions, age, gender and municipality, to exactly match the most recent population characteristics described by Statistics Canada.
2 Satisfaction with Regional services

Survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with Regional services they had used within the past year (Figure 1).

The ten rated services divide into two groups on the basis of satisfaction scores. The first eight services below receive very high ratings, averaging 8.0 or better. These scores compare well to national ratings from Citizens First 5 (2008)\(^1\). Citizens First separates garbage pickup (average rating of 7.9) and recycling (average of 7.4). Other points of comparison are ambulance services (7.8), vaccinations (8.0), public libraries (8.0), and museums/heritage sites (7.8).

Transit and road maintenance lag somewhat, but these services typically do score lower than others. In Citizens First 5, the national average for transit was 6.1 and the average for maintenance of municipal roads was 5.1 (Citizens First has no rating for Regional roads).

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\(^1\) Citizens First 5. ERIN Research Inc. for the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service, 2008.
Citizens First is a national survey of citizens’ satisfaction with services of all levels of government that has been conducted approximately every two years for the past 12 years. A number of Regional services are measured in this survey. As Figure 2 shows, the Region of Waterloo ranks as high or higher than the national average for each of the six services for which comparisons can be made. The Citizens First data are from the most recent survey, Citizens First 5, in 2008.

“I get good value for my tax dollars” is not a service *per se*, but is a cogent summary of how residents assess the services they receive.

**Figure 2. National comparisons with Region of Waterloo results**

Note: Garbage pickup and recycling are separate items in the Citizens First survey. The scores were 7.9 and 7.4 respectively. Figure 2 shows the average of these scores.
3 Drivers of service satisfaction

Based on the responses to various questions in the survey, it is possible to develop an understanding of the “drivers” of service satisfaction. Drivers are those factors that contribute most significantly to a result or outcome – in this case satisfaction with the Region of Waterloo services. As illustrated in Figure 3, the two most significant drivers of service satisfaction are “staff performance” and “timeliness.”

In Figure 3, the arrows represent the impact of one element on another. Larger numbers and heavier arrows are greater impacts. The number beside each arrow is a standardized regression coefficient. For example, the .39 for staff performance indicates that for each one point increase in staff performance, the Region can expect an increase of .39 points in service satisfaction. The difference between the .49 for timeliness and .39 for staff is small – they are similar in importance. The staff performance measure includes the four staff ratings that have the greatest impact on satisfaction:

- Staff were knowledgeable and competent;
- I got clear accurate information;
- I was treated fairly; and
- Staff went the extra mile to help me.

The arrow from timeliness to satisfaction says, in effect, ”I got timely service, therefore I am satisfied with the experience”, or conversely, “Service was not timely, therefore I was dissatisfied”.

---

2 The diagram shows results of a statistical analysis of the “recent service experience” those clients who had direct contact with Regional staff.
The arrow from staff performance to satisfaction says, “Staff gave me clear information, treated me fairly and went out of their way to help – so I am satisfied with the service”.

A final point about this model is the arrow running from timeliness to staff performance: When service meets clients’ expectations of timeliness, it reflects well on staff. The client’s logic appears to be, “I got timely service – staff are doing well”.

Figure 4 adds three additional “drivers” to the service satisfaction model, namely; outcome, access problems and a “clear process” group. The latter consists of two items:
- Procedures were easy to understand and complete;
- It was clear what I could do if I had a problem.

These additions work a little differently than timeliness and staff performance. Their main impact is not on satisfaction per se, but on clients’ perceptions of timely service and staff performance.

A negative outcome does have a small direct impact on satisfaction, indicated by the coefficient of -.11, (not getting what you want reduces satisfaction), but it has larger negative impacts on timeliness and staff performance. Clients who fail to get what they want tend to think either that they did not get timely service (they effectively wasted their time), and/or that staff performed poorly. They failed to get what they wanted because they perceived that they were treated unfairly and/or that staff gave the wrong information and/or that staff did not put enough effort into helping them.

Figure 4. Drivers of service satisfaction: With staff contact, Complete

The model accounts for 63% of the variance in overall satisfaction.
4 Growth and the economy

Four survey items on growth and the economy appear in Figure 5. Three of these assess agreement with the Region’s management of growth, while the third, “I like living in a growing community”, is a statement of personal values.

“I like living in a growing community” is repeated from the 2007 survey. The 2010 score of 7.2 is significantly higher than the 2007 average of 6.3.
Residents who like living in a growing community are distinctly more positive towards the Region’s actions in this area than others. In Figure 6, for example, those who agree with “I like living in a growing community” give the Region a respectable 6.7 out of 10 for managing urban growth. Those who don’t like living in a growing community give the Region just 4.0 out of 10.

**Figure 6. Attitude towards growth influences perception of the Region**

![Bar chart showing the impact of attitude towards urban growth on perception of the Region's actions.](chart.png)

"I like living in a growing community"
5  The environment

Management of environmental issues is a central element of regional responsibility. The first three items in Figure 7 speak to specific issues such as recycling that are part of the respondent’s immediate and direct experience. These get high ratings.

The final item, “The Region does a good job protecting the environment” gets a significantly lower score, possibly because the statement is rather less specific than the others: it is harder to agree (or disagree) with a very general statement than with an unambiguous one.

Figure 7. The Region’s management of the environment
Transportation is a top of mind issue for residents. In respondents’ verbal comments, three of the top four issues that were identified as “needs for improvement” are transportation issues, namely:

- Reducing traffic congestion;
- Road planning and roundabouts; and,
- Public transit including the Rapid Transit Project.

“The Regional transit system meets my needs” gets the lowest agreement score of this set. However, regular transit users give higher agreement scores than others.

One measure is repeated from the 2007 survey: “It's easy to get around in Waterloo Region by car” rated 6.6 in 2010; the increase to 7.2 for 2010 is statistically significant.

**Figure 8. Perceptions of issues in transportation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension (Average)</th>
<th>Percent of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's easy to get around by car in Waterloo Region (7.2)</td>
<td>3 8 19 34 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic congestion in the Region is a serious concern (6.7)</td>
<td>5 12 22 30 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would benefit from improved bus and rail links to the GTA, Hamilton or other nearby cities (6.0)</td>
<td>22 9 12 22 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Regional transit system meets my needs (5.4)</td>
<td>19 14 18 30 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
7 Well-being

The statements in Figure 9 describe several dimensions of well-being in which Regional government either plays a role or takes an interest.

It is interesting to inquire whether visible or ethnic minorities share the overall view on these issues, and the answer is clearly “yes”. Neither visible minorities nor those who speak other languages in the home differ significantly from the English-speaking white population on any of the five measures.

Figure 9. Statements describing general well-being

- My family has access to good care from Public Health (7.9)
- People in our community are open and friendly (7.7)
- People in our community value ethnic and cultural diversity (7.5)
- The gap between rich and poor is a growing concern in the Region (6.9)
- Homelessness and lack of affordable housing are growing concerns in the Region (7.0)
PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

The question posed in Figure 10 was also asked in the 2007 survey. In 2010, fewer people believe that crime has increased and more people believe that the rate has stayed the same. The difference is statistically significant.

Figure 10. “In the last five years do you think that crime in your immediate neighbourhood has increased, stayed the same, or decreased?”

The twin issues of crime and safety generated a large number of verbal comments (Chapter 10). Statements to the effect that the Region is a safe community outnumbered concerns about crime by a ratio of six to one. Examples are:

- *It is a good place because it isn't a big, big city like Toronto and I feel safe here.*
- *It's a really lovely, safe, old fashioned community with neighbours who step in to help take care of children and families. We are blessed in our community.*
- *I like the safety. We are not concerned about crime, break-ins, or kids playing outside.*
- *It's definitely a great place to raise a family because of the safety aspect.*
- *I feel safe, well protected, and served by the police services.*
- *I feel very safe, you can walk on our streets at anytime of the day or night.*
8 Quality of life

HAS QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVED?

A question from the 2007 public survey was repeated in 2010: “Over the past few years, would you say that the quality of life in Waterloo Region has improved, stayed the same or declined?”

The current results, Figure 11, show a small but statistically significant shift in the positive direction. In the 2010 survey, more people say that the quality of life has improved and fewer say that it has declined. It is interesting that the 2007 survey occurred before the recent recession and the current more positive results follow the recession. Perhaps this means that citizens living in the Region consider their community, their lifestyle, the resources and services they have and feel “lucky” in these widespread tough economic times.

A number of respondents expressed this attitude, for example:

- The region is very diversified – which makes it rich. We're lucky with the economy. It is an innovative community and we have our universities.
- We are so fortunate to live surrounded by such wealth and good things, that we need to help those people who don't have the same benefits we have.
- When you look at the totality of all the things here – employment opportunities and lifestyle, there is a better mix of what you need for a successful life than other places. We have two universities and a college and a good industrial base. Services are organized.
- Waterloo is still that magic place that is a great place to live that has all the large city amenities but is still very much a small town. Also, because of the mix of businesses the economy is diverse and resilient. I think we've done better during this downturn because of the economic mix that is found here.

Figure 11. “Over the past few years, would you say that the quality of life in Waterloo Region has improved, stayed the same or declined?”
DRIVERS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

The Region’s activities contribute to the quality of life that residents experience. Based on the responses to various survey questions, it is possible to develop an understanding of these factors (or “drivers”) that contribute most significantly to residents’ quality of life. The chart below shows the major drivers, based on residents’ perceptions of Regional performance. The size of the arrow indicates the strength of the impact; the number beside each arrow (a regression coefficient) more exactly expresses the size of impact.

The analysis shows that the Region’s management of growth and management of the environment are the strongest contributors to residents’ perceptions of the quality of life.

The quality of Regional services (roads, garbage pickup, etc.) is also important, as is access to public health services.

In all, a wide array of Regional activities contribute to quality of life.

Figure 12. Drivers of quality of life in the Region

Note: Perception that crime is increasing has a negative coefficient, meaning that this belief leads to lower quality of life scores.
9 Drivers of Trust in Government

Trust or confidence in Regional government arises in part when residents perceive that they receive good quality services from the Region, and also when residents share the vision of the future that the Region defines through its policies on issues such as growth and the environment. Perceptions of politicians and Council decisions no doubt enter the equation as well, however these are beyond the scope of this survey.

Figure 13 shows five indicators of trust in Regional government. Some comparisons:

- “The Region does a good job keeping residents informed” was 5.8 in 2007 and is 6.3 today, a significant increase.
- “I feel involved in decisions that impact me as a resident of Waterloo Region” was 4.1 in 2007 and is 4.3 today, not a statistically significant change.
- “I get good value for my Regional tax dollars” rates 6.4, well above the national figure of 3.6 for all governments from Citizens First 5 (2008).

Figure 13. Indicators of trust in Regional government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension (Average)</th>
<th>Percent of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All things considered, the Region is doing a good job (6.8)</td>
<td>3 6 25 50 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Region of Waterloo does a good job keeping its residents informed (6.3)</td>
<td>5 10 27 42 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considering the services I receive, I get good value for my Regional tax dollars (6.4)</td>
<td>5 9 29 40 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Region of Waterloo is in touch with the needs of my community (5.6)</td>
<td>9 14 35 34 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel involved in decisions that impact me as a resident of Waterloo Region (4.3)</td>
<td>19 22 34 18 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
DRIVERS OF TRUST IN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Figure 14 identifies the major policies and services that contribute to trust in government. Four elements are common to both quality of life and trust in government. These are:

- Management of growth
- Management of the environment
- The ability to access Regional services when needed
- Quality of Regional services.

The survey measures that make up both driver models are derived from the Region’s 2007-2010 Strategic Plan. Results therefore confirm that Regional activities encompassed by the driver models contribute materially both to quality of life and to trust in Regional government.

Figure 14. Drivers of Trust in Regional Government for the Region of Waterloo

Note: Traffic congestion has a negative coefficient, meaning that as congestion increases, confidence in government decreases.
10 Citizens’ priorities

OPEN-ENDED PRIORITY QUESTIONS

Residents voiced their priorities for Regional action through open-ended comments. To provide a balanced context, two questions were asked:

• What are the two best things about living in Waterloo Region?
• What two priorities do you think Regional government should focus on, over the next four years?

A content analysis of the comments identified 34 themes. In all, 4,160 comments were catalogued, an average of 3.6 per respondent. They divide almost equally between “best things” and “priorities for improvement”.

The same themes are used to describe both sets of comments. Some themes are positive by definition (e.g., “Waterloo Region is a big city with a small town feel”), while some are inherently negative (e.g. poverty) and others are mixed (e.g. growth, transportation).

Figure 15 shows residents’ carefully considered priorities for improvement. Five of them address transportation. Together, these account for 35% of all the “priority comments, making “getting around” the single biggest Regional issue on residents’ minds.

The closely related grouping of poverty, homelessness and supportive housing combines for 11% of comments.

Aside from issues needing improvement, it is clear that residents of the Region appreciate the quality of life that they enjoy and value the character and amenities of their community.
## Figure 15. Priorities for improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent of &quot;improvement&quot; comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure, road planning, roundabouts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing GRT, Mobility Plus</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion, traffic</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth, loss of farmland</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax control</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development, job creation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to GTA, other major cities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid transit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road maintenance, potholes, snow removal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive housing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking, biking trails, greenspace</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities, fitness, kids/teen programs, shopping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and recycling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality, adequacy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety, crime</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public input, communication</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, culture, heritage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to other locations/amenities in RoW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity across the Region</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family orientation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities, colleges, education, students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- **Transportation**
- **Poverty**
Figure 16. Best aspects of living in Waterloo Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percent of &quot;Best&quot; comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety, crime</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of community</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development, job creation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities, colleges, education, students</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, culture, heritage</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth, loss of farmland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to other locations, amenities in RoW</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's perfect!</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful, quiet, calm, clean</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking, biking trails, greenspace</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to GTA, other major cities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities, fitness, kids/teen programs, shopping</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big city with small town feel</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion, traffic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid transit</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional govt and politicians</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing GR,T Mobility Plus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure, road planning, roundabouts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and recycling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 17 combines the two preceding charts to put the positives and negatives in context. It shows:

- The number of comments on each topic;
- The ratio of positive to negative comments on each theme.

Thus, Figure 17 shows the most consistently positive themes at the top and works down to the most consistently negative themes.

Some themes are positive by definition (e.g., “Waterloo Region is a big city with a small town feel”), a sentiment that was expressed 68 times in all. This theme sits at the top of the chart. Most themes, however drew both positive and negative comments.

A few highlights:

- Economic development and job creation is the most frequent theme by a small margin; comments are positive by a margin of nearly 2:1.
- Crime/safety is the second most frequent theme, and positive comments (e.g., that the region is safe) outnumber negative comments (e.g., about crime) by 6:1.
- Growth drew equal numbers of positive comments (e.g., that the community is the right size, has a good mix of land uses) and negative comments (e.g., disappearing farmland, sprawl).
- Among the priorities for improvement, five relate to transportation: traffic congestion, road planning/roundabouts, Rapid Transit, road maintenance and public transit.
Figure 17. Summary citizens’ open-ended comments

Number of comments

- It’s perfect: 120
- Big city with small town feel: 68
- Regional govt and politicians: 23
- Peaceful, quiet, calm, clean: 113
- Sense of community: 246
- Universities, colleges, education, students: 158
- Safety, crime: 248
- Access to other locations, amenities in RoW: 133
- Arts culture heritage: 144
- Family orientation: 64
- Hiking, biking, trails, greenspace: 102
- Economic development, job creation,: 196
- Activities, fitness, kids/teen programs, shopping: 80
- Growth, loss of farmland: 134
- Access to GTA, other major cities: 94
- Environment: 34
- Rapid transit: 41
- Waste and recycling: 14
- Immigrants: 14
- Congestion, traffic: 47
- Public Health: 5
- Public input, communication: 9
- Persons with disabilities: 6
- Road maintenance, potholes, snow removal: 10
- Seniors: 6
- Long Term Care: 1
- Existing GRT, Mobility Plus: 10
- Infrastructure road planning roundabouts: 16
- Poverty: 11
- Equity across the Region: 2
- Water quality, adequacy: 3
- Tax control equity: 6
- Supportive housing: 0
- Homelessness: 0
11 Responses to pre-defined priorities

The survey set out ten areas of regional responsibility and asked respondents to rate them as priorities for the next four years. The scale ran from 1, not a priority, to 5, a major priority. This method differs from the verbal comments reported in the previous chapter, which were chosen by respondents as issues that they considered important.

Similarities between the scaled priority data and the verbal comments include:
• Reducing traffic congestion is high on both lists.
• Services for people living in poverty is high on both lists (i.e. combining the three verbal comment categories for homelessness, supportive housing and poverty).

Differences include:
• Improving transit is higher in the verbal comments than in the rated priorities. Since a relatively small proportion of respondents use transit regularly, it may be that they voiced their opinion in the open-ended section, while the car-driving majority are reflected more strongly in the scaled questions.
• Accessibility, services for families and services for seniors are high on the scaled priorities but much less prominent in the verbal comments.

Figure 18. Ratings of potential priorities in the next four years
12 Recommendations

The following recommendations for the Region of Waterloo flow directly from the research results.

2. Use the Drivers of Service Satisfaction as the foundation for improving service delivery.
3. Celebrate the positive results and build on the empirical confirmation that the Region of Waterloo is going in the right direction.
4. Enable staff and stakeholders to connect research results to their day-to-day work and translate results into action.
5. Report the highlights of the results to citizens and inform them of progress over the next four years.
6. Connect the ‘People’ element of the People~Service~Trust Model.

The Drivers of Trust in Government Model provides a strong rationale for undertaking these actions. Trust is increased by improving service delivery and by addressing citizen priorities, especially for improving transportation, managing growth, protecting the environment, and facilitating access to Regional services.
Region of Waterloo
Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Preliminary Public Input Report
Qualitative Methods
Phase 1

February 16, 2011
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2. Purpose and Methods</td>
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<td>3. Liked Best and Least about Waterloo Region</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4. Citizen Priorities</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>5. Communication and Engagement</td>
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<td>6. Next Steps</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>7. Acknowledgements</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Background**
The Region of Waterloo engages in a strategic planning process for every term of Council that identifies the most pressing priorities of the community. It also provides a focus for the organization and ensures that there is a common direction over the next four years for Council and staff.

In order to ensure that the Region’s Strategic Plan reflects the most pressing priorities of our community we collected community input through several methods during the time period of November 2010 – February 2011 (Phase 1) and we will continue to collect input throughout March and April 2011 (Phase 2).

The methods to gather public input include:
- A statistically valid, random telephone survey with 1160 residents. This survey was conducted by ERIN Research.
- Focus groups with a variety of stakeholder groups. These focus groups varied in length based on the group’s wishes.
- Key informant interviews.
- Outreach meetings with advisory committees.
- Self directed focus groups.
- On-line/paper survey.

**Purpose of this report**
The information in this report is part of a larger input process designed to collect information on public priorities for the 2011-2014 Region of Waterloo’s Strategic Planning process. The purpose of this report is to present the findings from the various qualitative methods used by the Region to collect detailed information from the public throughout Phase 1 of the consultation (November 2010 – February 15, 2011). The results of the statistically valid, quantitative telephone survey with 1160 Waterloo Region residents. It is important to note that overall the findings from the qualitative methods support, align and provide specific details on the findings from the telephone survey. Qualitative methods provide in-depth information rather than quantifiable information about a population which is why the Region implemented both qualitative and quantitative methods – to get a balance of in depth as well quantifiable information.
There are two phases to the engagement and consultation process for the Region’s strategic planning process.

**Phase 1** is more broad based and focuses on gathering high level priorities from the public and staff. This phase will provide input to Council regarding high level priorities for future. Phase 1 took place between November 2010 and February 2011.

**Phase 2** is to delve deeper and will validate and/or refine the themes generated in phase 1. Phase 2 will also identify actions and strategies to move the priorities forward in order to achieve the high level priorities identified in Phase 1. Phase 2 of the consultation will take place from March – April 2011 following Council’s identification of high level priorities of their February 18th Strategic Planning session.

This input has been termed consultation and engagement as the purpose of the process is two fold:

1. The consultation was specifically designed to gather public input on:
   - What is liked best and least in Waterloo Region?
   - Experience and satisfaction with Region of Waterloo services (barriers and suggestions).
   - Communication and engagement preferences.
   - Suggestions to boost trust and confidence in government.
   - Most pressing needs of community.

2. The consultation was also designed to:
   - Engage the community and staff.
   - Create awareness about the Region of Waterloo services and programs.
Speak with diverse communities to understand changing needs.
Create the opportunity for more in depth conversations and probe questions that were posed in the quantifiable, statistically reliable telephone survey.
Obtain broader insight into understanding on issues.
Gather input from groups that may not typically participate in a consultation process.
Provide information for other Region of Waterloo initiatives e.g., Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Service Strategy, Communications Strategy etc…

Who Participated?
The consultation activities included paper and on-line surveys, focus groups, self-directed discussion groups and outreach meetings.

Online/paper survey
The online survey was available to all members of the public and was promoted at various meetings, events, Face Book, Twitter as well as in the winter edition of Region News. A paper version of this survey was also developed and offered to the public. This survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Individual answers were anonymous as no identifying information was collected. Participants could skip any question they did not wish to answer. In order to promote the survey staff did some outreach to community groups and then attended meetings to explain the purpose of the consultation and provide instructions of where to find the survey. The survey was live until February 15, 2011 with 489 responses to-date.

Focus Groups
Focus groups were held with a variety of groups between November 2010 and February 2011. Efforts were made to host sessions and recruit participants from diverse groups in the community especially as they relate to the trends, issues and forecasts for our community. For example, because our population is aging and growing more ethnically diverse, specific efforts to engage seniors and ethnic populations were implemented. Also, in order to ensure that we heard from all members of our community, we specifically held focus groups with people who may not typically participate without targeted outreach. For example, focus groups were held with post-secondary students, people living with disabilities, people living on a low income and grade 9 and 10 students. These qualitative methods were also implemented in order to allow for more in-depth discussion and provided the opportunity to probe on questions that were included in the statistically reliable telephone survey. A background document describing the context and questions was distributed in advance to the participants.

A total of 18 focus groups were conducted between November 2010 and February 2011. 10 of the groups were moderated by an external consultant - Glenn Pothier from GLPi Consulting, and 8 others were moderated by Region of Waterloo staff. Sessions ranged in length from 1 to 2 hours depending on the wishes of the group. Questions were shortened in the sessions of medium length. Focus group sessions were held with the following groups:

Full sessions (1.15 - 2 hour sessions)
- Post secondary Students – 3 sessions
- Immigrant and refugees – 3 sessions
- Awareness of Low-Income Voices (ALIVE) - 1 session
- Seniors (including service providers of senior services) – 3 sessions
- General public – 1 session
- Cambridge Human Service Providers – 1 session
• Region of Waterloo Volunteers – 2 sessions
• Grade 9 and 10 students - 1 session
• People concerned about accessibility issues - 1 session

Medium sessions (45 minutes - 1 hour sessions)
• Employment and Income Support Advisory Committee
• Rural Realities Working Group

Outreach presentations were also made to the following groups in order to encourage participation in the on-line survey or to invite them to host or attend a focus group. Outreach presentations were made with the following groups:

Outreach Presentations to Promote On-line Survey
• Community Gardens
• Heritage Planning Advisory Committee
• Step Home – housing
• Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
• Cambridge Seniors Planning Committee – Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries
• Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition
• Crime Prevention Council
• Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group
• Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo
The following information presents the top of mind views about what people said they like **best** and **least** about living, working and playing in Waterloo Region. Several main themes emerged throughout the public consultation and while some participants may have placed more emphasis on certain issues or ideas than others, there was noticeable consistency of the themes and general approach among most participants and across the groups. It is interesting to note that some of the things that participants liked best were also cited as liked least. At first glance this seems contradictory but when looking closer at the responses there are different aspects of the same theme that are noted (See Top of Mind Views - Page 16). The two sides of each theme illuminate illustrate the need for careful messaging and action planning to address the concerns.

### Like Best about Waterloo Region

The following provides a summary of the most noted comments about what people like best about living, working and playing in Waterloo Region:

**Small town feel of Waterloo Region with big city advantages**
A common theme which was prevalent through all the consultations was that respondents enjoy the small town feel of Waterloo Region but appreciate the big city advantages. Taken further, one of the top responses pointed to the blend and close proximity of rural and urban areas and even the Region’s geographical location in relation to other city centres such as Toronto, received a considerable amount of responses.

“*It has many amenities like the big urban centres but you can afford to live here.*”

“The location – where we are situated – we are close to Toronto, Hamilton and the USA.”

“*Big city access in a comfortable, thriving community.*”

“The countryside and Mennonites being so close.”

“*Proximity to Hwy 401, 403, 407.*”

“It provides the amenities of bigger cities, yet it is still in some ways small town living. The fact that it is centrally located and near Toronto is also a benefit.”

“*Waterloo Region has everything - small-town feel, but big-city features (arts, entertainment, restaurants, etc.)*”

“It’s a good size - big enough to have a full complement of services, community activities, cultural events, but not so big as to feel “lost” in.”

“*Small town atmosphere / friendly even on the street strangers say good day.*”
Diversity of People
A frequent response to what people like best about Waterloo Region is its diversity of the people – sometimes referred to as multi-culturalism. Context offered around this answer supported the ideas of respect and peace, the welcoming nature of the people, and some feel the multi-culturalism in Waterloo Region is abundant for the size of the region. A commitment to newcomers was praised. Participants also noted that the Mennonite community had a positive influence on the community’s culture.

“Diversity, no matter where I go, there are people of all walks of life interacting. “

“The people are what I like best about Waterloo Region. As a new resident, I feel very welcome.”

“It’s diversity, the sense of community.”

“Vibrant multicultural community, lots of opportunities and good services.”

“Diversity of activities and culture.”

“Diversity, multiculturalism, vibrancy”

“Amount of diversity of the people and exposure to their cultures.”

Post Secondary Institutions
Being home to two reputable universities and a college was something residents often liked best about living here. The advantages listed included everything from excellent educational opportunities in the area to universities bringing an international flavour to the region. Many felt the universities and the students themselves help create an innovative and forward thinking community, help the economy, while others enjoy the free lectures.

“Having the two Universities and the college in town, nice flavour of growth and prosperity.”

“Two universities, hundreds of small tech companies, think tanks (PI & CIGI), & insurance companies really make the region interesting.”

Vibrant Arts and Culture Scene
The fact that Waterloo Region has a vibrant arts and culture scene was deemed almost equally important as the small town feel with bigger city advantages and the university contribution. However, one could surmise that arts and culture are often thought to be something a bigger city offers its residents so contributes to the unique feel in Waterloo Region that residents like so much.

“Great arts and culture – museum, cultural events, we do all of them well. That is impressive. The combination. We have all of them.”

“I love events like Oktoberfest, the Jazz Festival, Buskers, and the Multicultural Festival- there are lots of things to do that bring people together.”
“It has a lot of culture and arts consistent with a much bigger city while still maintaining a smaller community feel.”

“Availability of a wide range of facilities and arts and culture for a community this size.”

**Getting Around - Easy to Get Around**

Residents feel it is easy to get around in Waterloo Region especially in comparison to bigger urban centres like Toronto or Montreal. This is supported by factors such as being bicycle friendly, the trail system, the expressway, small downtowns and less traffic in comparison to Toronto. People like having other options for getting around in this community.

“Less traffic jams. Less rush hour. Free parking downtown.”

“Easy to get around by car when needed.”

**Green Space**

Survey responses indicated a value around green space and mentioned Waterloo Park, River Side Park in Cambridge, Victoria Park in Kitchener, rural areas, mountain biking trails, cross country ski trails and the fact that green space and forests are protected as some of the key things they liked best about the community.

“Waterloo Park and the feeling of community there. Also the trails in places like Columbia Forest and Laurel Creek.”

“I enjoy the outdoors so there is a large area to enjoy hiking, cross country skiing, cycling and nature trails.”

“I like the amount of natural trails, forest and the proximity to farmland.”

“The natural landscapes and the small city feel with no high rises, and the lush greenery and St. Jacobs close by for the farmers market.”

**Innovative/Progressive**

Although expressed in many different ways, residents feel Waterloo Region is an innovative and progressive community. They used adjectives like ‘forward thinking individuals’ ‘sophistication’ and ‘smart, interesting, innovative people’ to describe residents. Others described the region as a whole by calling it an ‘intellectual community’ the ‘knowledge capital of Canada’ and an ‘educational and economic power house’. Many cited that Waterloo Region has a “can do culture” with entrepreneurs and many world leading companies close by.

“Since I moved here 11 years ago I have seen the Region change, mostly for the better, to become more vibrant and interesting. I like the feeling of having been a part of that ongoing development.”

“It seems very progressive. public transit, roundabouts, green bins, compost giveaways, free composters and reduced prices on rain barrels, leaf collection etc.”

“The urban/rural mix of the neighbourhood, passionate and innovative people, the potential for growth and prosperity and the progressive planning and oversight to make this region one of the best places to live and work in Ontario.”
Collaborative Nature
A spirit of collaboration was noted by many respondents. Many felt that this was unique to Waterloo Region.

“Since we have a small town feel – there are so many opportunities for collaboration – they are more prevalent because we are still small enough.”

“There is ownership – this is their community – so many people who stay here or are born here and stay here – it is our responsibility sense of community.”

“The heart of the people in this community is good. All ages do volunteer work – they are the heart of our community.”

“Good co-operation between different communities (business, government and education, etc).”

High Tech Sector
Respondents felt that having a reputation for high tech innovation was one the things they like best about living in the region. Many named the region a leader in technology.

“We are the technology triangle of Canada – we can compete with big urban centres and still have a small town feel - and you see the horse and buggies – the mix of the two is really unique – one is completely high tech and then we have old order Mennonites driving up beside us in their buggies – a real duality in this community.”

Agriculture and Local Grown Food
Participants cited the fact that they could buy locally grown food in this region. They also talked about the importance of buying locally grown food and at most times of the year it was available in this community.

“The tradition of farmers markets and locally grown food. I really like having that in our community.”

“There are land spaces to have our community gardens and grow our own food.”

The Downtowns
Survey participants cited the city centres as has having a lot to offer and something they liked best. Culture, entertainment and accessibility were attributed to the two areas as well as convenience and appreciated for the revitalization of both. Some preferred one city over the others but all were equally praised for different things. Communities were liked for their village feel like Belmont village, Galt, Hespeler and the downtowns. Others described the communities here to be caring, family-friendly, giving, collaborative etc.

“You can find different things in each city – you find something you like somewhere. There is lots of variety”

“Developing "urbanity" while preserving rural.”
The following provides a summary of the most noted comments about what people like least about living, working and playing in Waterloo Region:

**Getting Around – Public Transit**
The most frequent answer given for what people like least about Waterloo region, in a single category, was getting around, and more specifically, public transportation. The reasons for the dissatisfaction were predominantly service oriented. For example, buses are thought to be too infrequent, too slow, too crowded in spots, unreliable and inefficient overall. It was suggested that what’s more challenging is using public transit to get from city to city like Kitchener to Cambridge.

“Region and municipalities should have better planning for transit – and for roads – if we are getting to green revolution then we need to look at Europe for models. Buses run infrequently. They should be coordinated so people don’t need to use their cars.”

*Transit big issue – if it was improved and worked for the people who need it then there would be a different feeling toward the region. When you start the day and it is negative because of the way you are treated on the bus or it blows by you–and you get awful service it taints your day and colours what you think of the region as well as the community.”*

“It’s hard to get around without a car beyond small segments of the cities.”

**Getting Around – Congestion**
The other “getting around” response focused on the issue of congestion with respect to traffic. Concerns about traffic were not confined to one area but linked to growth. However, highway seven to Guelph and downtown core traffic was noted. This could be linked with transportation in some ways when devising solutions.

When discussing getting around and congestion in the region, many respondents talked about needing better bike trails and walking access so that there is alternative methods of getting around. encouraged the community to maintain and expand the bike and walking path system.

“Bike paths – they are not enough safe enough, there is not good lighting and then if you ride on the road in the biking areas it is also not safe - we need to separate the bikes from the cars.”

“Quebec has dedicated roads for bikes – they have economy built around it and we have the space here to do it but we haven’t capitalized on it.”

“The path networks exist but they are fragmented. Walk along and then you are in industrial waste land or a gravel patch that goes onto the road – they need to connect. There is lots of potential there.”

“I don’t understand some of the planning that occurs on roads. For example, Ira Needles was finished a couple of years ago and already is in need of widening?? Why build and then a
few years later rebuild it? And how is it a pedestrian friendly zone? Planning needs to improve and the focus on people must be the prime consideration, rather than on cars.”

“Car-based, unsustainable urban planning.”

Growth Management
A theme that developed and is linked to a bigger picture is a dislike of suburban culture. Descriptions of exploding subdivisions, big box strip mall havens and Ira Needles Boulevard were considered responsible for breeding a form of suburbia respondents don’t like. Those that said ‘growth is changing the region’ feel suburban culture is ‘destroying what we have’. This can be linked to the previous analysis of what residents like best about Waterloo region and that is the current size and culture. Urban sprawl was mentioned as an issue in conjunction with concerns over a suburban culture.

“The fact that an extreme amount of our rich farmland is now covered in housing - we are growing rapidly in all directions and have paved over our food-growing areas. I'm also saddened that several small communities have exploded with subdivisions....and those who move in tend to spend their dollars (groceries, hardware, etc.) in the city rather than in their hometown…which creates bedroom communities.”

“Fast growing suburbia, with its block stores and endless housing. We are fast becoming like “anywhere”.”

“Sprawling suburbs; car-oriented development.”

Lack of Inclusion and Racism
Although many people cited that they like the sense of community and felt like they were connected to others in their neighbourhods, many cited that this was not the case. This was especially noted in more vulnerable groups such as people who were living in poverty and immigrants/refugees.

“I don’t want only acceptance I want to have a deep relationship with others in this community. Where can I understand the culture of others – I understand multiculturalism is important but it is important to let others know what it is about – I want to go deeper than acceptance – cultural sharing and integration I want from this community.”

“There is racism in this region. I have never experienced it like I have here.”

Encourage people to come here from other countries and then we do not accept them – they group together then with like minded people and then they are isolated and mainstream doesn’t like that because they are a group. We need to welcome people – integrate and not create the sub cultures.

“There is an invisibility around people who are not “mainstream” – new to area, poorer than others, with disabilities, GLBT, invisible and not considered – if you are not in mainstream you are not part of community.”

“Your community is judged by the way you treat your people.” I would like to take part in a lot of activities – yet I don’t have the ability to do so. This doesn’t make me think so highly of the community. I don't feel supported by the system or connected to my community.”
This was also cited by post secondary students. Although people like having the students and post secondary institutions in this community, post secondary students feel ostracized and do not feel connected to the community overall. Students however, feel isolated. Both sides suggested more student integration.

“There is no sense of real community— students – don’t stay so it is temporary sense of community. I can’t get away soon enough cause it feels artificial.”

“Weekends and evenings it is so hard to get around – can’t get to and from college so can’t join into festivals or events – no shuttle buses going to college. This limits students abilities to get involved in community events. It really isolates you.”

“There is an ongoing battle between students and local community – we are all in this community but don’t feel welcome – neighbours blame problems on students. There is nothing or nobody to bring us together. Students on periphery.”

Lack of Arts and Culture
Contrary to the comments that Waterloo Region has a vibrant arts and culture scene, were a number of responses pointing to a need for more arts and culture support. The responses given here allude to support for independent art and artists and cultural events rather than institutions like museums. A lack of opportunity for new artists was also mentioned.

“Culture and The Arts: I dislike the fact that the only Centre for the Arts is in Cambridge - why does Kitchener not have a similar, even larger centre for the performing and visual arts for instruction and studio space? I've been looking in this area (Kitchener) for studio space for painting, and Kitchener is sadly lacking in that. Let's convert a large old factory into visual art studios that people in the region can utilize inexpensively (maybe in a co-op format?). Other cities have this - I'd like to see Kitchener and Waterloo put on the map in terms of the visual fine arts.”

Some felt nightlife options are slim and more specifically, activities geared to the 20-35 age group are lacking. Some residents leave the city for entertainment and shopping due to perceptions that everything in the region closes by 5:00 p.m. It should be cross-referenced that when discussing the lack of nightlife or entertainment in downtown Kitchener for generation Y, that aggressive panhandling and intimidation of youth was a factor in staying away from Kitchener downtown.

“Around this area (Conestoga College Student) I can’t get anywhere – there is nothing to do around the college. With new campus we have more students with nothing to do. Really rely on transit. Even grocery store is not close. No amenities here.”

Fear of Change
Residents feel that change takes a long time in this region and that a lack of vision combined with “small town” thinking can often stifle progress. This is quite different and less significant than the findings that innovation is one the things citizens like best about Waterloo Region noted in the analysis of the opposite question. Finding that a ‘fear of change’ is noted among respondents in turn supports the idea that most region residents want an innovative and forward thinking region.
“Lack of commitment and general ambivalence from the population in general to accept and embrace change, to work together to create something great.”

“Not progressive enough. Where are large hotel chains, what great venue draws visitors? Not many upper end chain restaurants. We act like we are still in the 50’s in many ways.”

Inequities between Cities and Townships
Many participants commented on the perceived inequities of services and amenities between Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge. There were some that thought Cambridge and the townships were underserviced, expressed a desire for more balance, harmony and collaboration between the three cities and townships. Many made comments about the two levels of government and wished that services were aligned and that it was easier for citizens to know which organization does what.

“Townships do not receive enough services (e.g. need more publically-funded medical services, early literacy programs, seniors programs, social service programs such as job search assistance and food bank help, settlement work for Low German speakers, etc.).”

“Too many different levels of government is frustrating. City of Waterloo. City of Kitchener. City of Cambridge. Region of Waterloo.”

“Polarization – perception that some cities receive more than others – townships left out.”

“The bureaucracy and tooooo much government for such a small community. We like to think of ourselves as three cities but we are one community. That parochial mind set and thinking gets in the way of achieving what is necessary for the well being of our community.”

Water
Survey participants expressed concern for both the management of the region’s water and the sustainability of it throughout mounting growth pressures. Many comments were made about the quality of the water in relationship to the taste and the residue found in the water.

“The water has so much lime in it and calcium – the taste is not good – it broke my roommates coffee machine and it messes with your hair and the hard water stains.”

“I worry about where the water that we use will come from with all the new urban growth.”

“No clean city lakes with beaches for swimming in summer.”

“Water system. When I wash my dishes and look at it after, I feel like I am sitting by a stinky sewage canal that I can’t even use it for washing my hair.”

“Very actively promote energy and water conservation so we can live sustainably--NO water pipeline to Great Lakes!”

Aesthetics
A number of respondents said that the aesthetics of the region are unappealing and gave examples like waterfronts, highways, city entrances and urban cores as not attractive. In addition, were comments geared toward heritage preservation and the idea that older buildings should be kept and/or maintained. It was thought that this would help with beautification.
“The region tends to be a little on the conservative side, and the dependencies on cars and highways have made for some very ugly neighbourhoods.”

“Growing too big too fast (sprawl – newer subdivisions/planning – cram many cookie cutter houses into one street where they all look the same, no trees, etc.).”

“The physical environment is largely drab, dull, and uninviting. It seems that most commercial activity shuts down after 6:00 p.m.”

“Seeming lack of concern or value placed on heritage landscapes and buildings.”

“The entrances to the cities… If you are a newly visiting the city the entrance from King Street, brings you right into the narrow stretch of stores and automotive dealers. Next is if you jump on to Hwy. 85 to reach Waterloo, the first thing you see on your right is the Automotive Junkyard, these are not good first impressions.”
It is interesting to note that some of the things that participants liked best, were also cited as least liked. At first glance this seems contradictory but when looking closer at the responses there are different aspects of the same theme that have subtle nuances to the issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Least</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Town Feel, Big City Advantages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huge city with small town feel</td>
<td>Fear we will lose the small town feel due to high growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The size, amenities and small town feel of the region was a number</td>
<td>Not enough to do in this community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one theme throughout the survey as previously mentioned,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to feel a sense of community, know your neighbour,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel at ease getting around town gives Waterloo region residents a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lifestyle often reserved for small towns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bump into people you know as we are still small enough</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Getting Around - Transit</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price of fares - Inexpensive service – it is affordable</td>
<td>Reliability and frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iExpress</td>
<td>Too crowded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of Transit service to other communities seen as better</td>
<td>Inefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Waterloo Region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some drivers</td>
<td>Service and attitudes of drivers – not consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus going through the cities is a really good thing.</td>
<td>Rules for Mobility Plus e.g., for cognitively impaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses are accessible</td>
<td>No link from rural areas to urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus pilot to and from Elmira</td>
<td>Elmira buses termed as pilot does not inspire confidence that it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>will continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime bus service</td>
<td>Transportation system is not keeping up with growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No resolution on complaints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No transportation out to the industrial areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation between Cambridge and Kitchener needs to be more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>efficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Best

### Getting Around - Congestion on Roads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic not as bad as places like Toronto</th>
<th>Traffic is getting worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not convenient to get around anymore</td>
<td>Bottle necked driving routes especially at peak times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location is close to Toronto and the United States</td>
<td>Difficult to get to Toronto and United States due to traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bikes allowed on Grand River Transit</td>
<td>Can’t bike safely on roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike paths and bike lanes on roads</td>
<td>Attitude on the roads that cyclists don’t belong there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundabouts help move traffic</td>
<td>We need to teach people how to use roundabouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path networks exist but they are fragmented</td>
<td>Road system is confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction makes it impossible to get around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to the 401 is difficult due to congestion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Getting Around - Rapid Transit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rapid transit will entice people to take transit</th>
<th>Lack of decisions on Rapid Transit - flip flop decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensify downtown cores</td>
<td>Fear that Rapid transit will change the small town feel of this community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring developers to the area</td>
<td>Rapid transit will take away improvements to conventional transit system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the economy</td>
<td>Service not extended to Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase taxes to pay for it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication about the benefits and reasons why we need Rapid Transit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Growth Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small town feel with big city amenities</th>
<th>Exploding sub divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green space and trails</td>
<td>Trails do not connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent shops in downtown cores</td>
<td>Current planning promotes car culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blend of Rural /urban within short distance</td>
<td>Cookie cutter home design in subdivisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major changes in the downtown cores – positive.</td>
<td>Strip malls with big box stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean community</td>
<td>Growth is ‘destroying what we have’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich agricultural heritage</td>
<td>Transportation is not keeping up with growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of mixed and affordable housing in the downtown cores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human services not keeping up with growth management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diversity of housing– accentuates the growing gap of incomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best</strong></td>
<td><strong>Least</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity of People</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism of this community</td>
<td>Racism in this region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural fair</td>
<td>Sense of community is not real for students – they don’t stay - it is temporary sense of community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The welcoming feel of this community</td>
<td>Not enough ethnic and cultural integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of people</td>
<td>Ambivalence – whether immigrants are good for country or not. Drain resources and yet the message is that immigration is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mennonite traditions</td>
<td>Demonization of Muslim community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are friendly and willing to accept diversity.</td>
<td>Sense of snob ethic in Cities– blinds cities to the issues of poverty and homeless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very giving community with strong community support</td>
<td>No understanding of rural community issues – they are different than cities.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Post Secondary Institutions and Students</strong></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students help keep us keep fresh.</td>
<td>Students don’t feel sense of belonging to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote innovation</td>
<td>Neighbours view students as problems e.g., noise, messy yards etc…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships with research</td>
<td>Students feel connected to universities and college but not to the community – it is temporary sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universities and the college add flavour of growth and prosperity.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Affordability</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable community</td>
<td>Difficult to get affordable child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing a big issue – people find it hard to keep it. How do we increase affordable housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability – there is a gap – significant group that are losing ground. Costs different amounts to live in region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty in this region, homelessness.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Best

#### Arts, Culture & Heritage

| Events such as Jazz Festival, Multi-cultural Festival, Oktoberfest etc… | Lack of support for independent art and artists as opposed to cultural events and institutions like museums |
| Attraction to go to – new museum - broader now than children – titanic exhibit | A lack of opportunity for new artists |
| More to do now than just go to the movies. | Nightlife options are slim. |
| Tradition of farmers markets and locally grown food | Heritage preservation not a priority - older buildings not kept and/or maintained |
| Vibrant arts and culture scene | |

### Least

#### Innovation

| Can do culture – entrepreneurs – idea that there are so many world leading companies that are so close | Fear of change – can often stifle progress |
| That it is an intelligent community; e.g., Perimeter Institute, CIGI. | Change takes a long time in this region |
| High tech community | Lack of community vision |
| Technology triangle of Canada – and see the horse an buggies – the mix of the two – one is completely high tech and then real duality in this community | |
| Technology and we can compete with Toronto. | |
| RIM, CIGI, Perimeter Institute is in this community | |

#### Collaboration

| Services in Waterloo Region are quite good in comparison | Not a lot of communal space for people to work together |
| Willingness to collaborate among individuals | |
| Community comes together | |
| Working for next generations to come | |
| Opportunities for collaboration are more prevalent because we are still small enough | |
### Best Least

#### Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The farmer’s markets</th>
<th>Food deserts – especially in certain areas – e.g., low income communities, student housing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locally grown food</td>
<td>No access to public transit and supermarkets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best agriculture land in Ontario</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Region of Waterloo Programs and Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services for immigrants/newcomers</th>
<th>Don’t like the quality or taste of the water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many volunteer opportunities/a large volunteer base</td>
<td>Management of the region’s water and the sustainability of it throughout mounting growth pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with public health has been really positive. Open to listening. They have come into classrooms and are really friendly.</td>
<td>Sewage plant smells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Bin Program</td>
<td>Mental health supports – after hours – phone line doesn’t help out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Examples offered were STEP Home, refugee and immigrant programs and family oriented programs and public health outreach programs.</td>
<td>Women of multicultural descent are not getting access to family planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some bus drivers are great</td>
<td>Access to community services in the region – when dealing with vulnerable groups – it is difficult to access services as they are only in one community – spread the services throughout the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feel safe in this community</th>
<th>As we grow safety is being jeopardized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can walk at night</td>
<td>Certain areas of community do not feel safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little crime</td>
<td>Aggressive people asking for money in the core downtown areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Inequities between Cities and Townships - Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Least</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional council, good leadership, supportive council</strong></td>
<td>Disconnect between cities. Rivalry between Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge - expressed a desire for more balance, harmony, coordination and collaboration between the three cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well managed Region of Waterloo</strong></td>
<td>Too many tiers of government. Most felt this caused extra expense as well as confusion over which organization does what.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forward thinking government and the region’s stance on environmental issues</strong></td>
<td>Very confusing in two tier system – no clear or concise way to solve an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City officials say/feel/sense that students are a burden. Don’t take students seriously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to involve youth at this level (provide advice to politicians) – now and not just in future. Students have a lot of fresh insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No understanding of Cambridge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants were asked “What priorities do you think regional government (Region of Waterloo) should focus on over the next four years?” Discussions illuminated the most important priorities for citizens across all methods of consultation as well as across all groups that were consulted with as the following:

- Getting around the Region – Transportation
- Eliminating Poverty
- Creating More & Better Affordable Housing
- Managing Growth
- Supporting Arts and Culture
- Promoting Active Lifestyles
- Improving Services for Children, Youth and Families
- Improving Services for Seniors
- Increasing Inclusion and Promoting Diversity
- Improving Communication and Engagement

**Getting Around the Region - Transportation**
Transportation and getting around Waterloo Region was cited above all else as one of the single most important factors that has, and will impact quality of life as Waterloo Region develops into the future. Transportation and getting around the Region was identified as the most pressing priority for Waterloo Region. The majority of focus group participants understood and supported the need for Waterloo Region to move away from current dependency on private motor vehicles and greater transportation choice to help address existing and future congestion. Transportation issues were consistently named as the Region’s most serious current problem, with near-universal mention of traffic congestion and inadequacy of public transit. Respondents called for:

- Improved transit reliability
- Increase frequency of buses
- Greater consistency of transit schedule 24/7
- Have better customer service
- Increased number of transit routes, including direct routes through subdivisions
- Services to townships
- Better and more frequent services between the three cities
- Services to industrial areas
- Proximity to transit stops so people do not have to drive to get the bus
- Better waiting areas with shops and services close by
- Easier access in entering buses
- Decision on Rapid Transit
• New image for transit to entice people

Many respondents appeared to hold a (spoken or implied) view that a majority of the Region’s current transit users are individuals who do not own a vehicle or are in a lower income range. This finding presents a challenge as a perceptual / attitudinal transition will be required to make public transit a more broadly socially acceptable practice. Some respondents suggested that transit needs an image overhaul and that a new marketing strategy to make Transit look inviting and appealing was emphasized. Examples of cities who have made transit “trendy” were cited.

Participants pointed out that if the transit improvements were made, the transit system would be much more appealing to residents: the greater convenience, efficiency and comfort afforded would overcome any negativity that residents may currently feel towards public transit. Some felt that a Rapid Transit system would be the thing that would encourage people to take transit.

“Introducing LRT will bring people here, keep people here that will help support and sustain the local economy so that other priorities CAN be met.”

“Region wide transit. Make it excellent or we’ll all continue to drive, forever”.

“I would like to see the Region better connected to the GTA via Pearson. Right now it is quite difficult for a foreign visitor to arrive and visit Waterloo Region or make a trip to Toronto (I compare to European cities, London, England, for example).”

“Focus on transit (eliminate congestion) not just building bigger/better roads) but a thoughtful solution! (iExpress is a start).”

“Light rail transit to include ALL three cities. Cambridge should not be put aside.”

“Growth and transit. Both are related and both will lead to improvements in other areas.”

“Transportation and whatever you do about LRT it should go to Cambridge. I would support LRT if it would go throughout our community.”

“ Improving local transit and transit between Cambridge and Kitchener/Waterloo.”

“Improve transit schedules - not light rail as that will not meet the needs of all the people who need to rely on the bus to get to work and home early in the morning or late at night. It is absolutely pathetic right now. Increase frequency and extend hours.”

“Name the improved bus service by an imaginative name. There was a show on TV Ontario – e-design that had a city in South America that made it sexy to ride the bus. They called it something great.”

“Look ahead to the future of the city’s transportation needs and examine LRT idea, as well as Express Go Train service to Toronto.. we need this.. the sooner its built the cheaper the construction costs.”
“The regional government has an opportunity to paint a vision for the area. We are a vibrant community of forward thinkers. We need to lead the nation in breaking our gasoline transportation. Please invest in the future of LRT and support the development of electric vehicle infrastructure.”

“Improve transit service. Developing a public transit system that will promote intelligent growth patterns, ease traffic congestion and attract business to the community at large. Waterloo Region is at a critical stage of development and is in the position to make intelligent decisions that will positively effect the lives of all residents.”

“The transit piece is the next priority that is a point of contention for the community. This needs to be cleared up and good strong decisions need to be made and rationalized so that either way the community can support the work that is being done.”

“The most important priority for me is Light Rail Transit. It’s crucial to managing the growth we will get in the coming years. We need it to avoid the high costs of roads that will occur should we not get LRT, and it is cheaper than buses in the long run. We need LRT to plan properly for the future of our region, our young people.

“Light Rail Transit! This should become THE top priority to this region. Without the LRT, I will not be willing to give up my car for transit. Urban Densification in the Downtown/Uptown cores of Kitchener/Waterloo/Cambridge. Suburban sprawl is taking over our beautiful cities; commercial/residential resources are being pushed to the edges of the cities, instead of being in the core of the cities. This makes mass transit options less and less viable as we continue down this path.”

“Transit needs to be determined, as to what we do with LRT ideas. I feel the whole deal on LRT is too costly.”

“Transit, improved bus service in neighbourhoods and definitely "not" rapid transit which is a complete waste of money. I shouldn't have to wait 40 minutes for a bus.”

“Focus on expedient plans for routing vehicular traffic in the years ahead. We do not now and will not in the future have the population base to support the LRT transit system the region is lusting after. Neither do we have a large body of employees entering the downtown cores in the morning and leaving in the evening to supply the main passenger group. The LRT will become a white elephant which will require ever increasingly large subsidies to sustain it. We don't want it because we won't use it.”

When discussing getting around and congestion in the region, many respondents talked about the need for better bike trails and walking access. One of the Region’s existing strengths, according to the focus groups, is the Iron Horse Trail paths although respondents heartily encouraged the community to maintain and expand the bike and walking path system as they are fragmented and not well lit in certain areas. Support was also strong for community design to enable residents to walk to many of places they need to go – stores, services, amenities, bus stops etc. in order to get people out
of their cars. In addition, a few respondents mentioned the use of carpool lanes, better and more bike lanes, etc., as an alternate means to move around.

“Improved Transit and alternative transportation routes are needed (bicycle, walking paths).”

“Getting more input from the pedestrian public BEFORE making roadway/intersection changes. E.g. There needs to be a safer way to get across Ira Needles from the Westvale neighbourhoods... I suggest Pedestrian activated stop lights, or safety gates on the islands. Also, there needs to be lighting on the bridge over the train tracks (near Walmart) for the people who are walking in the evening towards the Ira Needles/Victoria intersection.”

Eliminating Poverty
Improving services for people living in poverty was a key priority across all groups who participated in the consultation process. Believing in the potential of people living in poverty and providing them with the supports, services and opportunities necessary to break free of poverty were cited as necessary in order to eliminate poverty. It’s about giving families the resources and the tools to succeed so that our economy grows strong today and for generations to come. It’s about believing that if we create more opportunity, we’ll create more prosperity for everyone. There was strong support for the Region to take a role in developing a plan to eliminate poverty as well as advocate on behalf of citizens living in poverty. It is important to note that responses around affordable housing were often linked to the poverty issue.

“The people who live in low income and poverty has magnified over the last 10 years. Therefore service providers like the Food Bank, and churches are facing strains trying to accommodate everyone’s needs.”

“You community is judged by the way you treat your people.” I would like to take part in a lot of activities – yet I don’t have the ability to do so”

“The Regional government has a lot more potential to lobby for the OW on behalf of the citizens.”

“Feeding hungry Canadian kids, creating jobs for Canadian citizens, affordable housing for Canadian citizens etc... take care of our people!”

“Assisting people who have their own home and have and are having a difficult time securing reasonable paying full time employment ($15.00 plus per Hr.), especially when they have used up all their other resources.”

“Improve services for people living in poverty (housing, life skills training/education).”

“Region of Waterloo can lobby the provincial government for more funding. Region lobbying for its people. Depressing to think that the regional government is not supporting them.’

“The attitude/perceptions – you’re often looked down upon. You need to advocate for them. You need a safe place, like ALIV(e). ALIV(e) and allies – is. YWCA, OWR, Teachers Federation – the dynamics are easy to change when you bring other people in – i.e. folks from
Council. They have no words, they cannot fight. i.e. the way the system is set up – “the system is not only intimidating, but also spirit crushing. You feel very alone”

“We need to be represented on regional council and council needs to advocate for people living in poverty. That voice has to be expanded – the Region could potentially use that voice to lobby folks and be taken seriously.’

“Improve services for people living in poverty (this should include mental health and addictions housing and treatment options).”

“Ensuring that the needs of the poor and modestly-income are not forgotten in the rush to woo technology and high tech interests.”

“We worked for 40 years and now we’re treated like we haven’t done anything. We need people in the region to stand up for us, because we’re worn out.”

“Hand up, not the hand out. If the Region recognizes that all of the citizens are worthwhile, you will have many people supporting you.”

“If we are treated like we are unworthy and there is not leadership helping to advocate for us then it is demoralizing.”

“There is an extreme need to get the people of Waterloo Region back to work and increasing the citizens general ability to earn a good living for their efforts. Individual high flyers are doing fine but overall people are less secure and earn a lot less for more work.”

“Very complex system. And creates barriers. Caught in a rat trap. Zero consideration given to people in that situation. “It’s like you’re being constantly punished when you’re in poverty. It’s like we’re going to put our foot down on you, and keep you there.” It’s hard to get out of debt and to break the cycle.’

Creating More & Better Affordable Housing
Creating sustainable affordable housing was identified as a priority for this community as housing is a basic necessity of life and an important factor for health and well-being. Segments of the population do not have housing. Affordable housing was cited as fostering equity, social inclusion, and security, and helping to create complete communities. Participants also identified a need for mixed housing so that there is a diversity of building types in each neighbourhood, including some single family dwellings, some multi-family dwellings (e.g., subdivided homes, townhouses) and some low-rise condo/apartment buildings. The quality of affordable housing was also cited as an issue in the current housing stock as walls have been noted as paper thin, floors are slippery and rooms have no storage space.

“More Housing for low income people and those with mental health issues. We don’t need “Shelters”. Give people Homes.”

“There is a lack of affordable housing (rental) in core for seniors, singles and low income.”

“The cost of housing is increasing continuously. Federal co-operative housing subsidies for the poor are being cut back, so their costs are increasing by almost $60.00 a month (a huge increase
for some) in the new year. What affordable housing there is often poorly managed. The cost of living is increasing far more quickly than are wages, increasing the level of poverty in this region. I know that it isn't perfect anywhere, but I think more effort could be made to increase affordable housing, ESPECIALLY closer to downtown, as few people on social support have vehicles. Let the Jane and Finch area in TO. be an example to AVOID. Disperse affordable housing among other forms of housing - don’t concentrate it in pockets the way it is often done. I live in a housing co-operative where subsidized units are dispersed among full-market rent units and we have little problem with crime and other social issues that are more common where subsidized housing is concentrated.”

“The SHOW project is a great success and this needs to be expanded.”

“Housing—lack of supportive housing in rural housing and in particular for seniors.”

“Smoking by-laws in supportive housing units…some people are not respecting those rules and they are not being enforced. People with mental health issues are not respecting the rules…and staff are telling residents who smoke that they do not have to respect the 9m perimeter outside the building when it is cold out. This is a problem on the entire SSH campus…not wanting it to be confrontational but trying to address it. There are certain residents that are grandfathered in and can smoke in their units. Everyone signed the same lease to say they would not smoke but they are and they are breaking the rules…so why are they aloud to get away with it at our expense”

Managing Growth
Growth management and urban sprawl are often mentioned together. Issues like saving farmland, protecting green space and intensifying growth in the urban areas only are supporting statements often accompanying growth and sprawl concerns. Providing a balance between residential and employment development while preserving the attributes that make our community so special as described in what residents like best should be protected as we grow. Growth management priorities were also often linked or coupled with the anxiety around urban sprawl or transit issues.

“Agriculture and urban growth. The threat of large corporations invading our region’s unique traits.”

“Green living/promoting green initiatives and plant more trees to double the tree canopy in the region over the next four years.”

“Managing the growing population and keeping the community cohesive and flowing.”

“Suburban sprawl is taking over our beautiful cities; commercial/residential resources are being pushed to the edges of the cities, instead of being in the core of the cities.”

“A reasonable plan for transit and sustainable growth management. They go hand in hand.”

Creating a Vibrant Arts and Culture Scene
Arts and culture makes important contributions to the quality of life in a community. Participants identified that arts and culture works to create a community that is vibrant and people centered. A vibrant arts and culture scene also boosts the image of the region, provide activities for people to do and bolsters the economy. Although participants cited arts and culture as something they like din this community, they also identified it as a priority to improve, through funding and promotions.
“It’s not particularly vibrant. The arts and culture sector requires more funding and support from government and business sectors. The cities “shut down” after 6 p.m. and you often need to leave town for entertainment, excitement, etc. Particularly if you’re not that interested in family-oriented programming (e.g. single or young couple in 20s/30s without children).”

“I would like to see better awareness from the general public about what is happening in the music community.”

“Does not promote the Arts very well. We have a world-class symphony, and attendance is very poor. As a result, all these wonderful musicians need 2nd jobs.”

“The arts are a pillar of our community and that pillar needs to be have a much broader base and must be sustainable and secure to attract and keep the type of individuals that will continue to grow and sustain our community.”

“Promotion of healthy community growth through support for arts, heritage, and cultural organizations that the provide roots of a truly healthy community.”

“Provide more support for arts, culture and heritage through events, festivals and promotions of them.”

**Promoting Active Lifestyles**

Services and supports to help Waterloo Region residents adopt healthier more active lifestyles was identified as a priority. Bike and walking paths and opportunities to engage in physical activity were all cited as needs for Waterloo Region.

“There is very little emphasis on alternative lifestyles such as local eating, organic food, and arts and culture.”

“Improve resources to support active lifestyles.”

“Improve resources to support active living. (Includes managing growth to allow for more parks, paths and community gardens).”

“Improve walking and bike trails so we can get out of our cars!”

“Create as many safe bike routes as possible. Encourage people to use their bodies for transportation. That is good for our health and for the environment”

**Improving Services for Seniors**

The population of seniors is increasing dramatically and because of this increase residents identified the need to address the issue of an aging population and coordinate, promote and support an age-friendly community. Seniors identified the need for information about programs and services and help to navigate the system, however, no single source of information is available. The need to develop shared strategic directions in the community and collaborate to implement coordinated actions to achieve this shared vision was identified.
“A community collaborative Senior Strategy that meets the needs and responds to issues important to Waterloo Region seniors is needed in order to coordinate and integrate services for seniors across the Region.”

“Need to develop age friendly communities!”

“Improve services for the elderly.”

“Seniors need to be aware of the services available to them and how to access them.”

“Encourage the community to be more aware of seniors and how and to help them…further develop a sense of community…”

**Improving Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity refers to a broad range of attributes such as social, economic, racial, cultural, disability, geographic and religious factors. Diversity was cited as a key characteristic that many people like best about Waterloo Region, however it was also cited as key priority area for improvement. This ever-diversifying population has expectations that the Region of Waterloo provide equitable services and programs that meet their needs and aspirations. In addition, there are pressures to effectively recruit and retain employees that represent this diversity.

“Show more leadership in terms of integrating into the community of newcomers.”

“Staff need cultural understanding of population, both from an ethno-cultural perspective and from a community perspective. For example we need staff who are familiar with rural issues and services.”

“I least like that we STILL have trouble trying to shop in many stores that ARE NOT wheelchair and/or walker accessible. So we refuse to shop in those stores.”

“Provide services for refugees as they arrive to our community. For generations, we have been successful because someone else has extended their help.”

“Inclusion – makes it possible for all our citizens to be included. People are excluded from so many things. Everyone has value.”

“Services need to get out in the community and do some outreach to the people in order to include everyone. You need to hear the issues and walk in our shoes.”

**Improving Communication and Engagement**

Every person in Waterloo Region in some shape or form is touched by Regional programs and services. Many citizens are not aware of what the Region does or what it could offer. As long as the general public and our stakeholders remain unaware of the Region’s value, our potential remains limited, citizens become skeptical and engagement is curtailed. Respondents told us that they would like the Region to tell them what services and programs they offer and would like to get involved in the way services are developed and delivered. This communication needs to come in multiple forms, be appealing to all age groups and accessible to all Waterloo Region citizens.
“The Region does good things but people don’t realize what the Region does. I would not of known if didn’t read the progress report. You need to point out the things you do. You touch lives of everyone.

“You need some communications with residents – cover depth and breadth and the good things you do.”

“You need to engage the community – I used to work at hotel in the concierge service and you help solve problems – maybe the Region could have a face at the university.”

“Work towards a Region wide recognition of the services and programs. The public has difficulty knowing who and what you are.”

“A more open process of engagement with citizenry about the issues we face and the need for decision and action that will lead to a more sustainable community both economically and environmentally.”

“For a region very diverse in the tech sector I have never been presented with any information about e-waste.”

“Don’t have a clue of what the region does – initiatives are hard to know. Need better communication.”

My second priority is building a better and more navigable regional website. Websites are how people find out about services, and it should be exceedingly simple for people to find exactly what they need on a regional website. It is the face of the region.

“The Region has not communicated to the citizens well – told us why you were doing things they way you are, or even consulted with us on service delivery. Roundabouts are a good example of lack of information and non –consultation with the community. We could make them more accessible to the community but no one listens when we tell them how – they don’t even return our phone calls.”
Clear, concise and consistent communications from the Region is in demand. Participants across all demographics said the Region needs to improve communications and for many reasons. Whether it was in a focus group, during a phone interview or when completing an online survey about Waterloo Region’s Strategic Plan, communications was top-of-mind as a priority, a request and a way to stay engaged.

Some participants stated that in order to gain trust and credibility among the public, more transparent and clear communications needs to be implemented. While others believe trust and support will be gained through increased awareness and understanding of what the Region does for the electorate. The Region asked the public three main questions around communications, however, keep in mind that communications suggestions arose in responses to all questions including open ended comments, questions about transit, services, priorities and more. Citizens were asked:

1. How would they like to be communicated to? This helped build a list of communications behaviours, tools and preferences among various target audiences.
2. Secondly, people were asked what types of information they needed or wanted to see.
3. And lastly, what can the Region do to engage the public more?

Themes
There were several overall themes that were identified throughout the consultation process.

- Diverse communities with multiple communication needs, channels, challenges.
- Desire for more outreach activities, interactive and two-way communications.
- Targeted communications. Tailored messages packaged with relevance in mind.
- Plain language communication. Clear, appropriate and jargon free.
- Creative communication campaigns. Make the information more exciting and appealing to different groups.
- Need for more visibility of the Region of Waterloo brand so that it is easily identified.
- Region service and identity awareness is needed.
How to communicate?
The most common communication method used by the public was the Waterloo Region website. It is described as the first point of contact for the region. Each comment was usually followed by a request to make it easier to navigate and understand.

“Your website is NOT user friendly! Get help!”

“Access to service information is cumbersome. Service providers spend a lot of time helping clients navigate services.”

“Explain what goes on at council meetings on the website but in simple terms, don’t speak legal-ese. Just tell what’s going on and why.”

“You need a more effective search engine so that we can find things on your site.”

Traditional methods like newspapers, direct mail and e-mail also topped the list overall. When delving into focus groups more targeted methods became clear. High school and university students wanted information through social media, blogs, RSS feeds and online messaging.

“Found this survey through twitter – great use!”

While seniors want direct mail, TV, newspapers and/or to hear information through the various agencies they work with.

“I know how to read…I do not use e-mail or the Internet.”

Rural and Immigrant focus groups expressed the need for more alignment with local or community venues for communications. Newspaper delivery is not consistent in rural areas so Internet and using libraries or community venues would work best. Immigrant groups prefer receiving information through their faith-based or community groups. Both groups suggested getting information through their children at school.

“Be more visible in the community, more outreach.”

“Travelling road show.”

What to communicate?
The most requested information is about services. Residents want to know and understand what the Region does, how it is different from the cities and how to access the services.

“Advertise what you do.”

“The smallest thing with the biggest impact the Region could do is get help with branding and communications. This is how you connect the services and programs and the people that pay for and use them.”

Research participants also say they want to see ongoing progress reports. They want to see what the Region is accomplishing and in turn, whether the Region is producing value for their dollar.
“Stronger communication with the community clearly outlining major initiatives, along with the Region’s methodologies for selecting the direction forward.”

“Do a better job of communicating what you are doing in the community.”

“Public trust will hopefully come from leadership that can communicate the evidence and background for decisions.”

**How to engage?**
The community outreach process used for this strategic plan was well received by all participants. Many asked for more outreach and focus group opportunities. The younger demographic suggested going to where the people are like the student campus or the malls, while seniors, low income groups and immigrants appreciated the focus group forum in their own environment. Overall everyone liked simply being asked for their views.

The most common recommendation for successful engagement cited by participants was online surveys - followed by public meetings and electronic communications. These were considered the most effective methods for engaging the public on major issues or decisions.

There was also an obvious trend in the desire to have more contact with councillors. This was apparent in more than one target group.

“Councillor contact, talking to staff, we want face-to-face.”

“Have a committee or regional meeting in Cambridge once in a while.”

“I would like to see councillors reaching out to a broader group of citizens. Currently, many people I talk to are unable to name one project the Region is working on or considering. Raise public awareness.”

“Need council to be more engaged in the community. Get out in the community and host meetings.”

**Issues and challenges**
Rapid technology changes continually create new ways to communicate, thereby forever expanding the number of channels available to disseminate information. Traditional communication methods remain and are still used by many audiences for different reasons. Younger audiences simply do not use more traditional methods and newer technologies offer more opportunities for interaction. Understanding what information is received by whom and in what way for what purpose is key to ensuring engagement, service satisfaction and trust. Interactive communications methods require more maintenance but offer more opportunities to provide accurate and consistent information. Customized communications and messaging for each audience has also come across as an emerging and necessary trend.

Further to this is the idea that residents expect the Region to reach out to them more. Dialogue and two-way communications are deemed necessary to foster enhanced services, engagement and understanding. People have expressed appreciation in being asked their opinion and are encouraged that the Region has been seen making efforts to come to them. Some have asked for
more of a presence in their community or through organizations with which they are aligned. This provides another opportunity to reach more vulnerable and/or specific groups.

Once engaged, the public wants to see and monitor progress. They want to know they’ve been heard and if confirmed they will more likely participate again. The onus will be on the Region to keep the public informed of progress as well as successes and sometimes even mistakes. This will help to satisfy requests for more transparency and progressive communications.
Preliminary results regarding what citizens like best and least about Waterloo Region and what they feel are the pressing priorities are reported together for both the online survey and focus groups in this report. More detailed analysis on the complete set of questions from the focus groups and on-line survey will follow in Phase 2 of the consultation process which includes information on how to make Regional services more inclusive as well as how to improve programs and services.

Based on this preliminary public input, Regional Council will identify draft priorities at their session on February 18, 2011. Based on Council’s identified priorities, Regional staff will identify more specific objectives and actions to achieve these priorities.

Phase 2 of the community input process will then be implemented in order to review the priorities identified by Council and to seek input on the proposed objectives and actions. These mechanisms may include a community leader forum, a web-based survey for the public to provide feedback and focus group sessions with the public and staff. These events will occur between March and May, 2011. The feedback collected from Phase 2 of the community and staff input process will be compiled and presented to Council, in order for Council to refine the strategic objectives and actions before finalizing the Strategic Plan. Once Council has finalized the Plan, each Department will develop a Departmental Strategic Plan which will align with and add further detail to the Corporate Strategic Plan. The public can anticipate further reports detailing progress in the future months.
Participants in the focus groups were asked how they felt about the sessions and overall feedback was very positive both in the fact that the sessions were held, but also because in most cases the meetings were held at the convenience and with the needs of the group in mind.

“This public input session is far more engaging than the traditional style ...it is more effective.”

“The fact that the Region came to us was very encouraging – you were making the effort instead of us having to come to you.”

“This session was really well worth attending.”

“I appreciate opportunities to provide input, open point of view, open communication.”

“The facilitator was very good in his approach and helped keep the conversation moving.”

“Keep doing these types of events.”

Acknowledgements
The Region of Waterloo would like to thank citizens who participated in this process for their input and insight on complex issues and priorities. The Region is grateful for your support and commitment to making Waterloo Region an even greater place to live, work and play!

We would also like to acknowledge Glenn Pothier of GLPi Consulting for his facilitation skills and help throughout our Strategic Planning Process. As well we would like to acknowledge ERIN Research for their work on the telephone survey.

Questions or Comments?
Should you have any questions, comments or need alternative formats of this report please contact:

Lorie Fioze,
Manager of Strategic Planning & Strategic Initiatives
519-575-4748
florie@region.waterloo.on.ca
TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: March 8, 2011

FILE CODE: F25-30

SUBJECT: GRANT APPLICATION TO FUND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHARGES – HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo establish a policy for the term of Council that a grant be provided to cover the cost of Regional Development Charges for housing built as a Habitat for Humanity project, with the cost of the grant to be provided from the Housing Reserve Fund, as described in Report F-11-013, dated March 8, 2011.

SUMMARY: Nil

REPORT:

Habitat for Humanity has requested, per the attached correspondence, that the Region provide a grant to cover the cost of Regional Development Charges for housing built as a Habitat for Humanity Project.

In 1998, Council approved a policy for that term under which Development Charge grants would be provided to Habitat for Humanity projects for the user rate portion of the Regional Development Charge, to be funded from the user rate budget. In 2001, 2004 and 2007, Council approved a policy for the term of Council under which grants would be provided to Habitat for Humanity projects for the full Regional Development Charge, to be funded from the Housing Reserve Fund. During the Council term 2007-2010, Habitat for Humanity constructed 19 townhouses and the total grants for development charges amounted to $124,900.

Ken Freeman, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity, confirmed that the organization commenced in 2010, its current project of building townhouse units on Howe Drive in Kitchener with the first block of 5 townhouses constructed in 2010. In 2011, it is expected that an additional 5 or 6 units will be constructed. In 2013, Habitat for Humanity expects to commence a multi-year project to celebrate its 25th anniversary. This project will be a townhouse complex of approximately 35 housing units to be built over several years. During the period 2011-2014, the proposed construction of approximately 15 townhouse units would, in the absence of a grant, incur Regional Development Charges of $130,000. Providing a grant of $8,652 per townhouse to offset Regional Development Charges represents a significant benefit to the specific Habitat projects and continues Council’s policy of supporting community housing initiatives. It is proposed that the policy of providing a grant be adopted for the current term of Council to be funded from the Housing Reserve Fund.

Staff was requested to bring forward a report on a policy related to development charge grants, exemptions and deferral requests, to include past history/practice, implications and options. The policy report will be presented for consideration in May 2011.
CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report supports the Strategic Plan Focus Area: Promote quality of life and create opportunities for residents to develop to their full potential – Improve choice and access to affordable housing in rural and urban settings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Based on the projected number of Habitat for Humanity projects, the proposed policy to provide a grant to cover the full costs of Regional Development Charges on Habitat for Humanity projects is expected to amount to approximately $32,500 per year, over the next four years. No cap has been placed on the amount of grant provided. Grants to cover development charges cannot be funded from the Development Charge Reserve Fund but must be funded from other sources, i.e. property taxes and user rates. The anticipated Habitat for Humanity grants can be accommodated within the Housing Reserve Fund.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Planning, Housing and Community Services Department staff have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Letter dated January 19, 2011 from Dr. Christina Vanin, Chair, Board of Directors and Dianne Stickney, Vice-Chair, Board of Directors, Habitat for Humanity Waterloo Region Inc.

PREPARED BY:  C. Barrett, Director of Financial Services and Development Financing

APPROVED BY:  L. Ryan, Chief Financial Officer
January 19, 2011

Mr. Larry Ryan, CFO
Regional Municipality of Waterloo
150 Frederick Street
P O Box 9051, Station C
Kitchener ON  N2G 4J3

Dear Mr. Ryan,

We are writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity Waterloo Region. The purpose of our correspondence is to thank the Regional Municipality of Waterloo for its generous grant in lieu of regional development charges for our building projects. We respectfully request reauthorization of this support by the newly installed Regional Council.

Habitat for Humanity offers qualified low-income families the opportunity to purchase their first affordable home. This is achieved through a program that combines “sweat equity” in lieu of a down payment, an interest-free mortgage, and payments that are geared to the family’s income, not a fixed term amortization. According to 2006 Census data, approximately 10.2 per cent of individuals and 11 per cent of families lived in low income in Waterloo Region. It is from among this demographic that Habitat for Humanity identifies hard working families who are seeking to better their lives and those of their children.

Our business model relies on the support of literally hundreds of citizens and dozens of corporations in our community. The Region’s support through the waiver of development charges is equally essential to our success, both for the financial relief it affords, but also as a validation of our work to the community.

Since the last reauthorization by the Region in 2007, Habitat has provided the opportunity for home ownership to 19 families; 29 adults and 44 children now have the security that comes with safe, affordable housing. Taken together with families whose homes were built with earlier support from the Region, 89 households in Waterloo Region have benefited from this assistance since 1989.

In the coming four years, Habitat will complete its second condominium townhouse complex; 16 units on Howe Drive in Kitchener. Like our 19-unit development on Cherry Street in Kitchener, the Howe project not only serves the direct needs of our clients but also furthers the Region’s land-use strategy of infill and intensification. Towards the end of the time span of this request, Habitat will undertake its largest ever development, presently in the pre-planning phase. It is anticipated that this condominium complex, situated in Kitchener Ward 9, will include over 35 units, with groundbreaking to occur during 2013 – our 25th Anniversary.

The continued support of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, by providing a grant in lieu of development charges, will be a tremendous help to our achieving our goals for the next four years. We urge your favorable consideration and invite you to contact Executive Director Ken Freeman at (519) 747-0664, extension 22, should you have need of additional information.

Yours truly,

[Signatures]

Dr. Cristina Vanin
Chair, Board of Directors

Dianne Stickney
Vice- Chair, Board of Directors

Building Homes ... Building Hope
TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: March 8, 2011

FILE CODE: D06-80

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF 2010 CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY FUND

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.

SUMMARY:

The Corporate Sustainability Fund was established in 2010 to provide seed money for environmental initiatives proposed by staff that fulfill the goals of the Region’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Funds allocated in 2010 supported projects which are reducing waste from Regional facilities and reducing greenhouse gas and other air emissions. In 2011, promotion of the fund will aim to encourage more staff to develop innovative project ideas that demonstrate leadership by reducing the Region’s overall environmental footprint.

REPORT:

The Region of Waterloo’s Corporate Sustainability Fund was approved by Regional Council in the fall of 2008 as part of a broader Environmental Initiatives Fund (CR-FM-08-025). The primary purpose of the Corporate Sustainability Fund is to financially support the implementation of small and medium staff driven environmental projects that help the Region achieve the goals of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy. In the context of the Region’s corporate operations these goals are:

- Reduction/diversion of waste at Regionally owned facilities;
- Reduction of water consumption at Regionally owned facilities;
- Reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) and other air pollutants from Regional activities (including reduction of fuel consumption within Regionally owned fleet vehicles and energy consumption in Regionally owned facilities);
- Land-based environmental enhancement projects on Regional property;
- Initiatives supporting improvements in environmental decision-making of Regional staff (i.e. sustainable behavioural change).

The scope of the fund is limited to the Region’s corporate operations, and delivery of Regional programs and services. The fund currently has an annual allocation of $100,000 as approved within the 2010 budget process. The focus of the Fund is to support initiatives that have the greatest positive environmental impact for at least one of the sustainability goals (as listed above) and demonstrate innovation in program areas.

Evaluation of proposals is conducted by the Environmental Leadership Committee which is comprised of five Commissioners and six Directors, along with the Region’s Sustainability Planner. In 2010, the initial call for proposals yielded seven proposals totalling $152,900. Five
proposals were approved in full or in part relative to the amount requested. One approved project was later withdrawn by the host department and therefore those monies were reallocated to one of the partially funded applications. The following is a summary of the four projects receiving funding from the Corporate Sustainability Fund in the year 2010:

1. $50,000 supported the completion of a Corporate GHG Reduction Plan with targets which will be the subject of a report to Regional Council in April for consideration. The plan considered over 100 actions to reduce GHG emissions from Regional operations as part of the Region’s commitment to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection program.

2. $25,000 supported the acquisition of source separations bins as well as educational signage to improve the diversion of recyclables and organic waste from Regional facilities. The signage will help reduce contamination of recyclable/reusable waste from incorrect separation. This project is expected to assist the Region in diverting an additional 10-20% of waste from facilities with these bins.

3. $22,600 went towards the purchase of electronic equipment that enables Social Service Home Child Care Caseworkers to save time, mileage and improve services to caregivers and parents. This project enables staff to complete many administrative tasks while out in the community which helps reduce unnecessary travel time driving back to Regional offices resulting in lower air and GHG emissions associated with their business travel as tracked within the corporate GHG emissions inventory. In the first few months of implementation, results showed a decrease of approximately 23% in staff business travel as monitored via mileage claims.

4. $2,400 has been invested in the planting of 80 trees as part of the Region’s Environmental Champions program. This program recognizes Regional staff that demonstrate commitment to the goals of the Sustainability Strategy by having a tree planted in their name in partnership with the Grand River Conservation Authority. Specifically, this project acknowledges new Travelwise members who commit to taking sustainable modes of transportation for commute to Regional work sites (e.g. transit, cycling, walking). In addition to the avoided air/GHG emissions from sustainable commuting, the trees planted for this program will offset approximately 15 tonnes of GHG emissions.

In promoting the Corporate Sustainability Funds during the 2011 calendar year, senior management will challenge staff to develop a greater number of innovative project ideas for consideration and possible funding. The call for staff proposals is being planned near Earth Day in April of this year. Results will be reported to Council annually after completion of the awarded projects.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Focus Area 1 - Protect and Enhance the Environment:

- Objective 1 - Develop an integrated approach to environmental sustainability

The Corporate Sustainability Fund also is reflective of the Region’s Innovation and Collaboration values by fostering an environment of leadership, excellence and creativity and building internal relationships to achieve common goals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Corporate Sustainability Fund annual allocation was approved as part of the 2010 budget process and was fully expended as described above. The Community portion of the Region’s
Sustainability Fund is currently being considered within the 2011 budget process.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Development of this report included interdepartmental feedback via the Environmental Leadership Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:

PREPARED BY:  David Roewade, Sustainability Planner, Corporate Resources

APPROVED BY:  Gary Sosnoski, Commissioner, Corporate Resources
TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: March 8, 2011 FILE CODE: D06-80

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FCM PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.

SUMMARY: NIL

REPORT:

Regional Council passed a resolution on April 6, 2010 (CR-FM-10-007) to join the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection program (FCM-PCP). Over 200 municipalities across Canada have made a commitment to the FCM-PCP program since 1997 including the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo. This program commits municipalities to complete five milestones for both their corporate operations and their community scale over a ten-year period. The five milestones are:

1. Creating a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and forecast;
2. Setting an emissions reductions target;
3. Developing a local action plan;
4. Implementing the local action plan or a set of activities; and
5. Monitoring progress and reporting results

A report on the Region of Waterloo’s corporate scope of milestones 1 – 3 will be forthcoming to Council in April.

Part of the rationale of the staff recommendation to join FCM-PCP is that it strategically positions the Region of Waterloo to participate in an emerging effort to develop a community-wide GHG action plan led by local organizations, such as Sustainable Waterloo and REEP Green Solutions, and to enhance the potential for collaboration with area municipalities. For example, one noteworthy benefit for area municipalities who have already joined or are considering the FCM-PCP program, is that only one community GHG inventory and action plan is required for the entire region rather than one for each individual city or township. This has potential to save on time, costs and duplication in collecting data and conducting public consultations if a collaborative approach is taken to develop the plan as each participating municipality could be acknowledged by FCM as completing milestones 1-3 for the community scope.

The Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, amongst other organizations, have all been supportive of REEP over the past several years and more recently of Sustainable Waterloo with regard to their Regional Carbon Initiative launched in 2009. This initiative encourages local organizations to develop an action plan to reduce their organization’s GHG emissions and currently has 35 local members participating from private, public and non-profit sectors. The Region of
Waterloo joined Sustainable Waterloo’s Regional Carbon Initiative at the same time as a Council resolution was passed to participate in the FCM-PCP program. These strategic partnerships are inter-related as it has created a local network of organizations interested in mitigating the negative impact on Climate Change by reducing GHG emissions from activities within Waterloo Region.

Over the past two years, there has been demonstrated leadership within Waterloo Region to support the development of a community-scale GHG action plan. Sustainable Waterloo, REEP and student research groups from the University of Waterloo have been involved in feasibility research and facilitation of discussions on establishing a local partnership to achieve this goal. The research on other Canadian municipalities who have developed a local GHG action plan indicated that collaboration with community stakeholders is critical for success in the plan’s development and its implementation.

In the Fall of 2010, the Boards of Directors of both Sustainable Waterloo and REEP supported their staff to explore a partnership with the Region to assist in the development of a community scale GHG inventory and action plan. This new partnership endeavour - referred to as the Waterloo Region Climate Collaborative - would go beyond the Region’s existing collaborative relationship with Sustainable Waterloo and REEP and could prove to be invaluable to optimize the benefits to the Region and the local community, particularly with respect to leveraging resources to assist the Region in completing community milestones 1-3 in FCM-PCP as previously committed. To date, these two not-for-profits have been playing an important role in collecting data from the local utilities, engaging stakeholders and investing resources to develop a collaborative approach to addressing the need for greenhouse gas reduction in Waterloo Region.

Sustainable Waterloo and REEP are submitting funding applications to local and provincial grant agencies in March and April to assist with the development of the local action plan (i.e. FCM-PCP milestones 1-3). They are also beginning to seek more formalized involvement of other stakeholders such as area municipalities, utilities, post-secondary schools and local school boards, along with private sector and community-based organizations. By the time funding decision are made by grantors in the summer, it is hoped that other interested stakeholders will be ready to formally sign-on to participate in the Waterloo Region Climate Collaborative to develop a community-wide GHG action plan. The Region of Waterloo is eligible to apply for FCM Green Municipal Funding (GMF) to support work towards achieving milestones 2 and 3 and will prepare an application in due course (milestone 1, the GHG emissions inventory, is not eligible for FCM-GMF funding).

Draft terms of reference are being developed for the collaborative to provide options for different degrees of participation such as task forces focussed on a specific organizational sector (e.g. public/private) or emission sources, (e.g. transportation, buildings and energy, waste), as well as a broader advisory committee. Sustainable Waterloo, REEP and the Region of Waterloo are being positioned as Lead Project Partners (i.e. project managers) as they are applying for the financial resources to ensure the FCM-PCP milestones are completed.

Based on consultation with FCM and other municipalities, preliminary budget estimates indicate that it could cost $300,000 - $400,000 to complete a community-wide GHG emissions inventory, action plan (including public consultation) and targets for a region of our size. It is anticipated that the funding applications being prepared by Sustainable Waterloo and REEP will provide approximately 50% of the resources required and that the Green Municipal Fund would potentially provide another 25%. The remaining costs would be sought after from organizations willing to participate in the collaborative including the Region of Waterloo.

The Region’s potential contribution is included in a 2011 budget issue paper, currently being considered by Regional Council, requesting resources to implement the Sustainability Strategy.
The budget request identifies a need for capital dollars for technical consulting services, of which a portion would be allocated for establishing a baseline GHG emissions inventory. In the event Council does not approve the budget issue paper then the uncertainty of the Region’s contribution source would have to be resolved prior to making any formal funding commitment to commence work on the community climate action plan.

In order to build on the leadership of other local organizations and to fulfill the Region’s previous commitment to FCM, it is important for the Region to consider entering into a formal partnership with Sustainable Waterloo and REEP to develop a community-wide GHG action plan. When Regional staff provides a report on the corporate scope of their GHG action plan in April, a collaborative agreement will be brought forth for Council consideration to formally establish this partnership as part of the Waterloo Region Climate Collaborative. Region Legal staff are being consulted regarding the types of provisions required for the development of a suitable collaborative agreement that addresses the utilization of financial resources and data, overseeing work of consultants/project coordinators and completion of work plans as accepted by the funding agencies.

The initial community support that has been shown recently has the potential to leverage resources to create a successful action plan which is supported by participating organizations that have the authority to implement local GHG emissions reduction initiatives. This support directly aligns with the Region’s Strategic Vision of “…an inclusive, thriving, and sustainable community for current and future generations” as well as the Region’s Environmental Policy Statement in terms of “embracing environmental considerations in its decisions and fostering community stewardship of the natural environment.”

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Focus Area 1 - Protect and Enhance the Environment:
  ➢ Objective 1 - Develop an integrated approach to environmental sustainability

Focus Area 6 - Service Excellence
  ➢ Objective 6 - Strengthen and enhance partnerships

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Region’s contribution toward the community GHG partnership in the amount of approximately $25,000 forms part of the sustainability issue paper before Council as part of the 2011 budget process.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Development of this report included interdepartmental feedback via the Environmental Leadership Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:  NIL

PREPARED BY:  David Roewade, Sustainability Planner, Corporate Resources

APPROVED BY:  Gary Sosnoski, Commissioner, Corporate Resources
TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: March 8, 2010

FILE CODE: L07-90(A)

SUBJECT: SURPLUS DECLARATION AND CONVEYANCE ADJACENT TO COLUMBIA STREET, CITY OF WATERLOO TO THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WATERLOO

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo:

a) Declare the lands described as Part Lot 1, Municipal Compiled Plan of Subdivision of Lot 6, German Company Tract, being Part 1, Reference Plan 58R-16677, in the City of Waterloo surplus to the needs of the Region, as detailed in Report No. CR-RS-11-015 dated March 8, 2011, and provide the standard public notification as required by the Region’s property disposition by-law; and

b) Approve and execute all documentation related to the conveyance of the lands described as Part 1, Reference Plan 58R-16677, at the cost of the Region, to the Corporation of the City of Waterloo for road widening purposes, for the sum of $1.00, as detailed in Report No. CR-RS-11-015 dated March 8, 2011, pursuant to the Region’s property disposition by-law and the satisfaction of the Regional Solicitor.

SUMMARY: Nil

REPORT:

On June 24, 2009, Regional Council approved, under Report CR-FM-09-016, the acquisition of a two acre parcel of land for the construction of the new Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) North Division. The lands are located on the south-east corner of Weber Street North and Columbia Street East in the City of Waterloo and front onto Columbia Street.

Facilities staff subsequently made a site plan application to the City of Waterloo with respect to the proposed building construction for the new North Division building. A condition of site plan approval is a 3 metre road widening dedication to the City of Waterloo along the northerly property line of the lands adjacent to Columbia Street East, which widening is in compliance with the Waterloo Municipal Plan width for Columbia Street. The total area being conveyed is approximately 1,792 square feet. Facilities staff advises that they have no concern with the conveyance of these lands from the property.

The Region’s property disposition by-law requires advertising of any proposed conveyance of Regional land in a local newspaper. When the requirements of the Region’s property disposition by-law have been met, the subject road widening dedication will be conveyed to the Corporation of the City of Waterloo. As the widening is authorized under the Planning Act at no cost to the City of Waterloo as a condition of Site Plan Approval, the Region will be responsible for all associated costs, such as advertising and registration of all documentation.
The subject lands are shown attached as Appendix ‘A’.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

This conveyance supports Focus Area Five of Infrastructure as it will allow Waterloo Regional Police to improve the facility from which policing services are delivered in the City of Waterloo.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The approved WRPS Capital program for the development and construction of the new North Division Facility is $15,597,000 ($18,797,000 less estimated proceeds of $3.2 million from the existing North Division) prior to inflation adjustments included in the draft 2011 capital budget and forecast and accommodates the costs referred to in this Report. The project will be funded from Regional Development Charges, debentures and the sale of the existing North Facility.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Facilities Management division staff of Corporate Resources have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix “A” – location map of lands.

PREPARED BY: Joan Moore, Property Agent

APPROVED BY: Kris Fletcher, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Resources
Present were: Chair T. Galloway, *K. Seiling, and C. Zehr

Members absent: S. Strickland, J. Wideman

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

None declared.

PRESENTATION

a) Evan McDade and Heather Urie, Deloitte re: 2010 Audit Plan

E. McDade and H. Urie provided the Committee with an overview of the Region’s audit service plan, noting items of particular relevance to the 2010 audit, including:

- Changes in assurance standards according to new Canadian Auditing Standards;
- Explanation of impacts of new standards, and reporting differences;
- Explanation of auditor’s required reporting to Audit Committee with respect to correction of misstatements;
- Audit scope, including materiality guidelines;
- Consideration of the risk of fraud;
- Areas of audit risk, with descriptions of issues, risk, and audit responses;
- Timing and communication plan for Region’s audit service, with fees;
- Disclosure of significant communication between external auditor and management; and
- Declaration of Deloitte’s independence from the Region.

E. McDade provided the Committee with a copy of the audit service plan as well as a letter stating Deloitte’s independence from the Region; both are attached to the original minutes.

E. McDade clarified for the Committee that the Region’s audit will account for changed standards, particularly at it relates to CAS 540. He also noted the conditions of concurrence on financial statements which are required for approval of the statements.

The Committee observed the $14.7 million threshold amount for materiality to the Region’s audit, and that transactions above 5% of that figure are considered to be meriting additional attention from the auditors. E. McDade affirmed that the latter amount is considered an internal standard at Deloitte, which is generally accepted in Canada.
K. Seiling left the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

E. McDade solicited members of the Committee for issues of interest for the Region’s audit, and emphasized that any such issues can be brought forward to the auditors at the convenience of Committee members.

The Committee discussed audit testing for various forms of receivables, as well as reporting on reserve funds transactions and balances.

The Committee confirmed with E. McDade that reporting of communications between the external auditor and management does not compromise the independence of the auditor, and is a new disclosure that is required for the audit process.

Larry Ryan, Chief Financial Officer, indicated that the Region is in the last year of its contract with Deloitte for audit services, and that a request for proposal for audit services will be going out in 2011. E. McDade confirmed that audit services related to the Waterloo Regional Police Service are included in the auditor’s basic fees, and that the audit for police examines the financial statements without attention to items that would not have a material impact on the audit, such as misappropriation of seized property; he indicated that Deloitte works with internal auditors in examining the potential for such risks. Calvin Barrett, Director, Financial Services/Development Finance, noted that it would be a special situation to have Deloitte engaged in such an examination.

K. Seiling re-entered the meeting at 4:08 p.m.

REPORTS – Chief Administrative Officer

a) CA-11-002 2010 Internal Audit Report

Received for Information.

Mike Murray, Chief Administrative Officer, introduced David A. Young, Manager, Internal Audit, and provided a broad overview of the report.

D. Young provided a synopsis of the report, listing the extensive range of activities undertaken by the internal auditor, including compliance audits, control consultations, and program reviews. He provided detail on the activities related to program audits previously undertaken and indicated that reviews of the airport and rent supplement program will occur in 2011. He explained the application of enterprise risk management to form a risk based framework for internal audits.

M. Murray observed that staff aims to conduct two program reviews per year, and that program reviews often engage outside consultants in their execution. He estimated the total budget for internal audit to be approximately $300,000 annually. The Committee ascertained the educational and professional backgrounds of internal audit staff.

M. Murray clarified for the Committee that the goals of the internal audit and program review function includes assurance of value for money, but more broadly addresses the efficiency, effectiveness and compliance of Regional activities and programs.
The Committee asked how budget discussions and comments received from Council impact the selection of programs for reviews. M. Murray indicated that those factors are accounted for, as well as discussions among the Corporate Leadership Team as informed by the internal auditors; clients and users of Regional programs under review are also engaged during the process.

The Committee inquired as to the potential benefit of liaising with internal audit staff from other municipalities. D. Young described his experience and impressions of meetings with staff at the Region of Peel and the benefit of implementing the systems in place there. M. Murray noted that department heads are engaged with colleagues at other municipalities, and Penny Smiley, Commissioner, Human Resources, noted that the Municipal Internal Auditors Association could be a potential facilitator for internal audit staff.

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking Sheet was received for information.

NEXT MEETING – to be announced

ADJOURN

MOVED by C. Zehr
SECONDED by K. Seiling

THAT the meeting adjourn at 4:30 p.m.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE CHAIR, T. Galloway

COMMITTEE CLERK, M. Grivicic
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<td>Assess the application of the prequalification guidelines (both generals and sub contractors) and report back to A &amp; F after one years experience</td>
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