



Region of Waterloo

Planning Information Bulletin

Date: March 7, 2022

Subject: 2022 POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS ESTIMATES FOR
WATERLOO REGION

Background:

This bulletin highlights key aspects of Waterloo Region's population and household growth and how recent growth compares to long term trends. The total year-end population and household estimates are used by many Regional and Area Municipal departments, agencies, boards and community groups to plan for growth, support infrastructure and service programs, develop municipal benchmarks and performance indicators, calculate service costs per resident, assess housing need and track population-related trends.

Population and Household Estimates

The Waterloo Region total population as of year end 2022 is estimated at 647,540 people, including university and college students temporarily residing in the Region. Waterloo Region continues to grow at a steady pace, reflecting the diversity of the local economy and the community's desirability as a place to live. In 2022, the population grew by 14,660 people, a growth rate of 2.3%. The estimated number of households is 232,540 representing a growth rate of 2.25% or 5,120 more than 2021.

The overall persons per unit (PPU) has tapered from 2.75 people per unit in 2006 to 2.70 in 2016, and is currently estimated to be 2.70 in 2022. The change in PPU trend is a result of a number of factors. Increasing proportions of non-permanent residents (including international students and visa-holding workers) requiring housing, together with increasing housing costs is resulting in denser living arrangements. Recent population growth has also occurred from migration from GTHA municipalities, largely concentrated in those aged 25-39. That age group has the highest rate of family formation. As Waterloo Region attracts families, the average occupancy overall increases as a result. While historical declines in PPU is largely attributed to the aging of the population, the increases in student enrollment mixed with larger proportions of those aged 25-39 moving to Waterloo Region is believed to have balanced out the overall PPU in the Region.

	Region of Waterloo**	Cambridge	Kitchener	North Dumfries	Waterloo	Wellesley	Wilmot	Woolwich
Total Population Year-end 2022*	647,540	144,810	277,910	11,520	151,440	11,560	21,990	28,310
Population in Regular Households	626,730	142,080	273,030	11,360	139,530	11,500	21,610	27,620
Population in Collective Dwellings***	20,810	2,720	4,880	160	11,910	60	380	700
Total Population Year-end 2021*	632,880	142,510	270,840	10,930	147,520	11,490	21,880	27,710
Additional Population	14,660	2,300	7,070	590	3,920	70	110	600
Population Change 2021-2022 (%)	2.32%	1.6%	2.6%	5.4%	2.7%	0.6%	0.5%	2.2%
Households Year-end 2022*	232,540	52,480	104,310	3,910	50,820	3,410	7,950	9,660
Households Year-end 2021*	227,420	51,460	101,100	3,720	50,380	3,390	7,920	9,450
Additional Households	5,120	1,020	3,210	190	440	20	30	210
Household Change 2021-2022 (%)	2.25%	2.0%	3.2%	5.1%	0.9%	0.6%	0.4%	2.2%
Persons per Unit+	2.70	2.71	2.62	2.91	2.75	3.37	2.72	2.86
Temporary Student Population (included above)	35,820	700	4,130	10	31,340	(30)	(180)	(150)
Students Arriving	44,120	2,620	8,070	170	32,990	50	80	130
Living in Student Residences	10,430	-	530	-	9,900	-	-	-
Living in Other Accommodations	33,680	2,620	7,540	170	23,090	50	80	130
Students Leaving++	(8,300)	(1,920)	(3,940)	(160)	(1,650)	(90)	(260)	(290)

* Based on available data from the 2021 Census, includes adjustments for recent residential development, students and other foreign/temporary residents, net Census undercount, and vacancy rates. Due various corrections and adjustments, direct comparison to previous years estimates are not valid.

** Municipal totals may not add due to independent rounding.

*** Collective dwellings include student residences, nursing homes, group homes, hospitals, larger lodging houses, etc.

+ 'Persons per Unit' (PPU) calculation is based on the 'Population in Regular Households', not on 'Total Population'.

++ These are students who leave home to attend school. They represent the reverse flow of the temporary students arriving in the Region from elsewhere.

The Region of Waterloo's 2022 total year-end population and household estimates are based on population and dwelling counts produced by Statistics Canada from the Census of Canada, conducted on May 11, 2021, however they also include an undercoverage rate (4 per cent), an adjustment for occupied units to year end 2022, an estimate of students who are living in the Region while they study at our post-secondary institutions. As such, the Region's total year-end population is recommended for purposes of estimating the number of people consuming services in the Region, such as water, wastewater, police, and ambulance.

Population and Household Trends

Recent population estimates supplied by Statistics Canada in their annual components of growth estimates has shown a steady growth of population in Waterloo Region primarily through intra-provincial migrations, as well as growth in non-permanent residents¹. Intra-provincial growth represents individuals who move to Waterloo Region from within Ontario. Non-permanent residents are individuals who reside in Waterloo Region on a work or study permit.

A forecast of growth anticipates the Region's population to grow to 659,300 people by 2023 year end, a growth of 11,760 people. Through 2022, building permits were issued

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1710013601>

for around 4,700 units. The time from building permit to construction completion and occupancy varies by project, but that figure provides an indication of how many housing units may be occupied in the near future.

Figure 1 Population Growth for Waterloo Region, 1996 - 2022

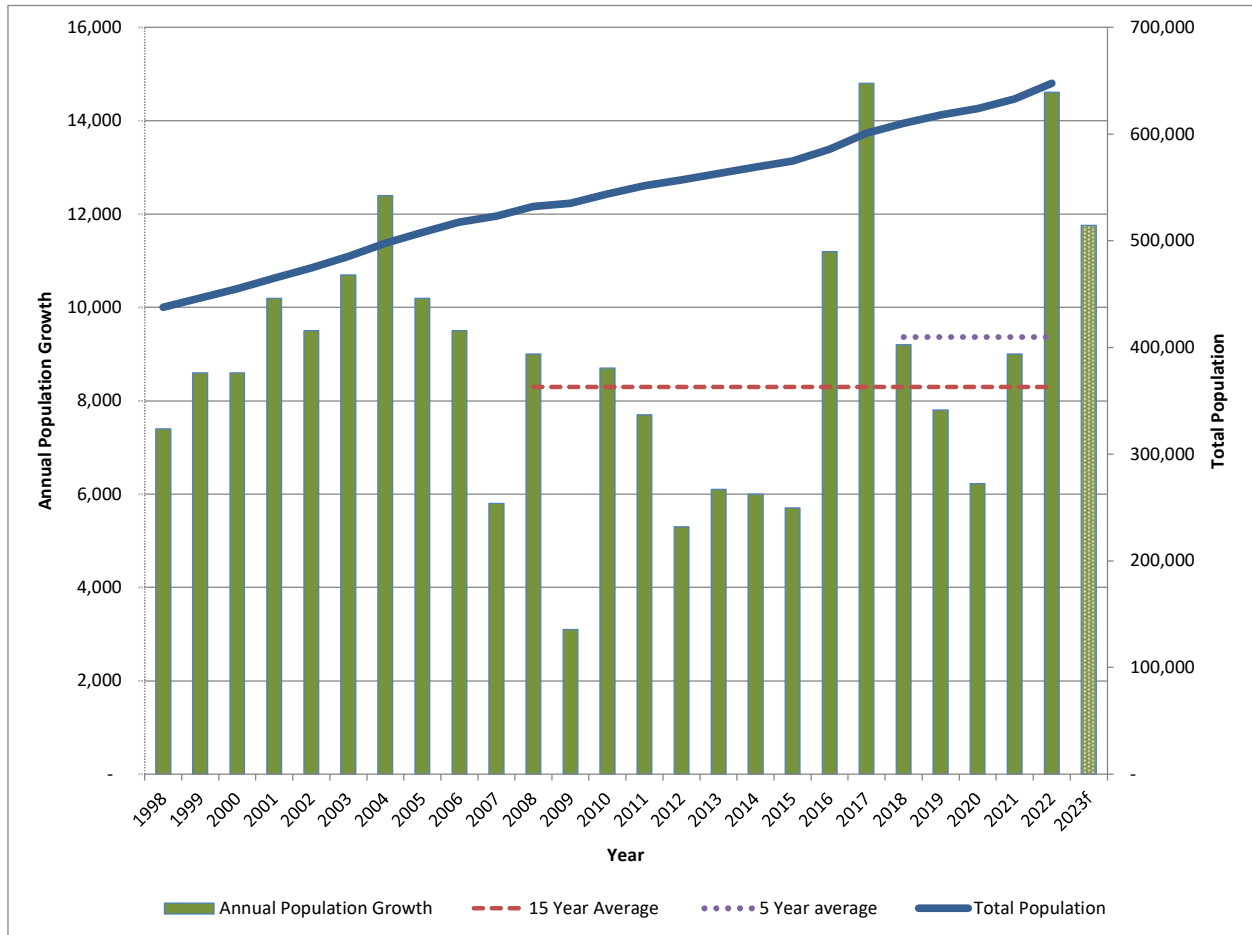


Table 2 Long-term Trends in Population and Households: Waterloo Region

Year-end	Population			Households		
	Total Population	Annual Growth	Change %	total Households	Annual Growth	Change %
1998	437,600	7,400	1.72%	154,950	2,940	1.93%
1999	446,200	8,600	1.97%	158,270	3,320	2.14%
2000	454,800	8,600	1.93%	161,590	3,320	2.10%
2001	465,000	10,200	2.24%	164,600	3,010	1.86%
2002	474,500	9,500	2.04%	167,530	2,930	1.78%
2003	485,200	10,700	2.26%	170,820	3,290	1.96%
2004	497,600	12,400	2.56%	175,080	4,260	2.49%
2005	507,800	10,200	2.05%	178,780	3,700	2.11%
2006	517,300	9,500	1.87%	182,200	3,420	1.91%
2007	523,100	5,800	1.12%	185,130	2,930	1.61%
2008	532,100	9,000	1.72%	188,800	3,670	1.98%
2009	535,200	3,100	0.58%	189,820	1,020	0.54%
2010	543,900	8,700	1.63%	193,230	3,410	1.80%
2011	551,600	7,700	1.42%	196,490	3,260	1.69%
2012	556,900	5,300	0.96%	198,480	1,990	1.01%
2013	563,000	6,100	1.10%	200,830	2,350	1.18%
2014	569,000	6,000	1.07%	203,660	2,830	1.41%
2015	574,700	5,700	1.00%	205,990	2,330	1.14%
2016	585,900	11,200	1.95%	209,240	3,250	1.58%
2017	600,700	14,800	2.53%	213,220	3,980	1.90%
2018	609,900	9,200	1.53%	216,220	3,000	1.41%
2019	617,700	7,800	1.28%	218,900	2,680	1.24%
2020	623,930	6,230	1.01%	222,300	3,400	1.55%
2021	632,880	8,950	1.43%	227,420	5,120	2.30%
2022	647,540	14,660	2.32%	232,550	5,130	2.26%
2023f	659,300	11,760	1.82%	237,300	4,750	2.04%
5-year average		9,368	1.51%		3,866	1.75%
15-year average		8,296	1.41%		3,161	1.54%

f - Forecast

Estimates of Post-Secondary Students

The temporary student population contributes substantially to the total population of Waterloo Region. Estimates of the post-secondary student population and housing is based on recent data acquired from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College.

As of November 2022, there were 78,100 post-secondary students enrolled in full-time programs at Conestoga College, the University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University, on the campuses that are located in Waterloo Region (Figure 2).

Prior to 2016, growth in international student enrollment was minimal. Between 2016 and 2022, the percentage of international students increased as a proportion of the total enrollment. The increase in the number of international students has an effect on

Waterloo Region's population since most require housing within the Region, compared to domestic students, many of whom commute from other jurisdictions or already live within the Region. Overall enrollment growth to 2022 was generally consistent with enrollment increases in previous years. Of the full-time students studying on local campuses, it is estimated that in a typical year over 63,700 would reside in Waterloo Region, and the remaining 14,400 students live outside the Region.

Table 3: University and College Enrollment by Institution (Fall 2022)

	Conestoga	Waterloo	Laurier	Total
Full-time Local Enrolment	23,500	39,300	15,300	78,100
Commuters, co-op work term, etc.	6,600	7,200	600	14,400
Resident in Region	16,900	32,100	14,700	63,700

Waterloo Region would have a net increase in population of 35,820 based on the usual influx of students, in addition to those already living here. Figure 4 shows the temporary student population by municipality, net of those student who live in Waterloo Region and move elsewhere to study.

Table 4 Temporary Student Population Estimates for Waterloo Region

	Region of Waterloo**	Cambridge	Kitchener	North Dumfries	Waterloo	Wellesley	Wilmot	Woolwich
Temporary Student Population (included above)	35,820	700	4,130	10	31,340	(30)	(180)	(150)
Students Arriving	44,120	2,620	8,070	170	32,990	50	80	130
Living in Student Residences	10,430	-	530	-	9,900	-	-	-
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