



Region of Waterloo

Speaking to Regional Council: What You Should Know as a Delegation at Council and Committee Meetings

What is a delegation?

A delegation is a person or group who would like to speak at a Regional Committee or Council meeting regarding an issue or concern that is important to them or their community, and who would like to share their opinions or point of view with Councillors before a decision is made.

Delegations are encouraged to bring their concerns to a Committee rather than directly to the full Council. Committees allow the work of Council to be dealt with in a fairly informal setting. This is when issues are discussed in detail and where Councillors will weigh all options before making a recommendation. Then, once the recommendation is voted on at a Council meeting, a ruling is considered to be made and the issue decided. Council also passes by-laws to ensure the issues they've debated and decided are legally authorized.

The First Step

You are encouraged to first contact Regional staff to discuss your concerns. If you do not know who you should speak with, call 519-575-4400 and a Customer Service Representative can assist you. Some issues may not need a decision by Regional Council and yours may be one which can be resolved at the staff level.

If your concern is a matter to be dealt with by Committee, and then by Council, you can request to be a delegation to speak before Councillors.

- To register as a delegation for any Committee or Council meeting, to inquire about meeting dates and times, or to obtain any other assistance or guidance, please call 519-575-4400 or contact the office of the Regional Clerk by e-mail at regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca.
- You can also register as a delegation in person by visiting the Clerk's office at:
Regional Municipality of Waterloo Administration Building
Council and Administrative Services Division
150 Frederick Street, 2nd Floor, Kitchener
- **Delegation Registration Deadlines** (as set in the Region's Procedural By-law):
 - ▶ To ensure your name will be listed on the regular printed agenda, delegation registration should be received by noon on the Thursday before the meeting.

- ▶ We recognize this is not always possible. In these cases delegations must register before 4:30 p.m. on the Monday before Committee or Council meetings to receive the full time allotment for speaking.
 - ▶ Delegations who register after these deadlines may still be heard, but will have less time to speak.
 - ▶ More details about time limits can be found in this Guide under the heading "[At the Meeting](#)".
- When you register, please be prepared to provide your full name (and the name of your business or organization if appropriate), address, daytime phone number, e-mail address if you have one, and the topic you want to speak to Regional Councillors about. If you have received a letter or saw advertising, it is helpful to give this information as well.
 - An individual delegation is one person who wants to speak on their own.
 - A group delegation is considered to be 3 or more people representing a group or organization that wish to speak collectively regarding the same issue.
 - Staff from the Clerk's office will follow up to get more information about your issue and to confirm your registration as a delegation, and give you more information about the meeting you will attend.
 - You will also be given information on how the Clerk's office can assist you in distributing handouts, as well as how and when to send a presentation for the meeting, if you have one.
 - Delegations are listed and heard in the order that the Clerk's office received their registration.
 - Councillors also recognize that issues which individuals or groups wish to raise may occur on very short notice and, in that case, Council or Committee may waive the prior notice requirement and hear the delegation even if they have not had time to register.

When & Where Do Regional Council and Committees Meet?

Committee meetings typically take place during the day (usually Tuesdays), and Council meetings in the evening (usually Wednesdays at 7 p.m.). These meeting dates are identified in the Council & Committee Meeting Schedule available on the Agendas and Minutes page on the Region's website:

regionofwaterloo.ca/regionalgovernment/agendasminutes.

Any changes to meeting dates require proper notice to be given in advance as identified in the Region's Procedural By-law. A link to the By-law is available on the Region's website: regionofwaterloo.ca/regionalgovernment/standingadvisorycommittees.

Committee and Council meetings take place in the Council Chamber at Regional Headquarters, 150 Frederick Street, 2nd Floor, Kitchener.

For a printed copy of the Procedural By-law or the Council & Committee Meeting Schedule, please contact the Regional Clerk's office by calling 519-575-4400 or by e-mail at regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Before the Meeting

In order for you, as a delegation, to make an effective presentation, you should know that Councillors get a lot of information at their meetings. It is important and useful for them to know before the meeting what issues are going to be discussed. Agendas are prepared by the Clerk's office for this purpose and contain staff reports which provide the necessary background information as well as proposed recommendations.

- **Have you discussed your concerns with staff** so they can prepare Councillors with a report regarding your issue? You can check with the department concerned to find out how much time would be needed for this. Then Committee members (Councillors) will have your information available to them before your presentation. If you are not sure which staff to contact, call 519-575-4400 and a Customer Service Representative can assist you.
- **Contact your own Regional Councillor** regarding your issue. They may be able to provide you with information, and it is helpful for them to know your concerns before you speak to the whole Council. A list of Councillors is available on the Region's website (regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regionalgovernment/regionalcouncil), or by calling 519-575-4400 and speaking to a Customer Service Representative.
- **Write out your presentation.** This can help to keep you focused and stay within the time allowed. More details about time limits can be found in this Guide under the heading "[At the Meeting](#)".

What's Next?

- **Do you have written material** you would like the Councillors to receive before the meeting? It is best to make this information available in advance of the meeting so that Councillors and staff are aware of your concerns. This can be done either through attaching it to the agenda prepared for the meeting (typically distributed on the Friday before the meeting date), or handed out at the beginning of the meeting.

If handouts are to be provided at the meeting please be prepared to provide 30 copies (collated, stapled and 3-hole punched) for Councillors, staff, as well as for any media present. Please note that any presentations, submissions or handouts provided are public information and will be attached to the original minutes, as well as posted on the Regional website. **This also includes any contact**

information that any of these items contain. Staff from the Clerk's office will assist you in getting this information distributed.

- **Do you have an audio-visual presentation?** Are you planning to show a PowerPoint presentation, view websites, or even have maps, videos or photos you would like to show? The Council Chamber is equipped with current audio-visual equipment so Councillors and Staff can view your presentation, overheads, videos and web-pages. There is a dedicated computer for this purpose in the Council Chamber; external computers are not used for presentations. Staff in the Clerk's office will assist you in arranging for your needs.

Please be prepared to provide electronic materials at least 2 days before the meeting to allow time for your presentation to be checked by staff to ensure all will run as expected. Don't assume that your presentation will work on another computer the same way as it does on yours, so it is wise to make these arrangements in advance. All presentations are attached to the minutes and posted to the Region's website for public information.

- **Agendas** are prepared for each Committee and Council meeting and include all reports that will be discussed at the meeting. All agendas and minutes are available to the public before the meeting on the Region's website (regionofwaterloo.ca/regionalgovernment/agendasminutes), and printed copies are offered at the office of the Regional Clerk, 150 Frederick Street 2nd Floor, Kitchener. **All are available by 4:30 p.m. on the Friday before the meeting.** A consolidated Council agenda is printed and posted on the Region's website the day of Council meetings to include additional items not available on the original agenda. Consolidated agendas for Committee meetings are typically not prepared unless there are significant additions or changes to the meeting.

At the Meeting

Delegations are usually heard near the beginning of either Committee or Council meetings. Delegations to Committee meetings have more time to speak than at Council meetings. Please note that **all members** of a group must speak to be registered as a group delegation, and each person should provide different information.

Committee Meetings:

- Each individual delegation has **10 minutes** to speak.
- A group delegation (3 or more people representing and **each** speaking for the same group) has **20 minutes in total**.
- Delegations that register after the deadline may still be heard but will have 5 minutes to speak (or as determined by the Committee Chair).

Council Meetings:

- Individual delegations each have **5 minutes** to speak.

- Group delegations have **10 minutes in total**.
 - Please note that **all members** of a group must speak to be registered as a group delegation, and each person should provide different information.
 - Delegations that register after the deadline may still be heard but will have 3 minutes to speak (or as determined by the Regional Chair).
- ▶ There may be a staff presentation before delegations are heard on a particular topic, and would be listed on the agenda.
 - ▶ When it is time for you to speak, the meeting Chair will call your name. At that time, you will come forward to the podium at the front of Council Chamber. At the start of your presentation please be sure to clearly state your name, organization or group you are with, where you live, and to speak directly into the microphone provided.
 - ▶ Time limits are strictly followed but the Chair may allow a delegation to speak longer. The Chair also typically warns delegations when they are nearing the end of their time limit.
 - ▶ Please direct your comments to the meeting Chair rather than to individual Councillors. You may want to begin your presentation with: “Good morning/afternoon, Chair X and members of Regional Council. I would like to speak to you about ...”, or in some similar way, as you feel comfortable.
 - ▶ Keep your comments to the point and avoid wandering from the topic you came to speak about.
 - ▶ Following your presentation you may be asked questions by the Councillors to clarify items in your presentation or for further information which may not have been provided.
 - ▶ Often there is more than one resident who wishes to speak about the same issue. They will be heard on the basis that the second, third or fourth (or more) person shall not repeat what has already been said, but only provide new information. It is okay to state simply that you agree with what someone else has already said.

After you have spoken and there are no further questions, you will be asked to sit down. Councillors may then:

- Debate your request among themselves
- Ask staff for more information
- Decide on a recommendation for Council
- Discuss the item later in the agenda and make a decision
- Refer the item to a future meeting if they feel they need more information before making a decision
- Simply receive the item for information (which means no decision to change current policy is supported)

While Committee meetings are fairly informal, all Regional meetings follow “Robert’s Rules of Order” regarding procedure. All meeting rules and processes are also guided by the Region’s Procedural By-Law 00-031, as Amended, which is available on the [Region’s website](#), as well as by contacting the Clerk’s office.

As noted, delegations are strongly encouraged to bring their concerns to a Committee rather than directly to Council. However, if a delegation wishes to challenge the decision of the Committee, they may request an opportunity to speak at a Council meeting. They should then follow the [registration process](#) to ensure they are listed on the Council agenda and will be permitted to speak.

All Committee and Council meetings are open to the public and media, and are webcast and available on the Region’s website:

regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regionalGovernment/WebCouncilStreaming .

Many Council meetings are also broadcast on RogersTV. Your comments are considered part of the public record and may be reported in the newspaper, on the radio or on television.

Please note:

- The use of cameras and recording equipment may be prohibited if disruptive to the meeting.
- Picket signs, banners or placards are **not** allowed in Council Chamber or meeting rooms.
- Applause, booing or other audible demonstrations of support or opposition are discouraged as it could be intimidating for those with opposing views. Please display the same courtesy and respect to others that you expect for yourself. Delegations and members of the audience are requested to respect all citizens regardless of differing views and opinions.
- All electronic devices should be turned to non-audible or silent while attending meetings in Council Chamber.

Tips for Effective Presentations

1. **Show up early** enough that your presentation can be loaded (if you did not send it in advance) and handouts can be distributed.
2. **Identify your main point right** from the start and stay on topic.
3. **Speak clearly.** You will be using a microphone so you do not need to speak loudly, but make sure you speak into (but not too closely to) the microphone.
4. **Stick to your time limit.** Keep your presentation relevant and to the point; you only have 5 (for Council) or 10 (for Committee) minutes. Make sure you use your time well. It’s always okay to stop speaking before your time is up if you’ve made your point.

5. **Keep it simple; use facts not generalities.** People often stop paying attention when presented with complicated drawings and tables. Use simple graphics and highlight the points that are important. Maps are always useful if you're referring to a particular location. Support your message with facts that are specific, provable and memorable. Avoid using acronyms and jargon as not everyone is aware of their meaning.
6. **Don't just read from slides.** If you're simply reading your slides as presented you may quickly lose the interest of everyone in the room. Try to add to the information on the slides, keeping your audience engaged in what you are saying rather than just having them read along with you.
7. **Don't skip around.** Skipping over slides, backtracking to previous information, or including things that don't really belong gives the impression that you are unorganized.
8. **Repeat your main point** (or summarize your point of view) at the end of your presentation. It is important and can help Councillors remember what is important to you.
9. **Have a separate handout.** If there's information you want Councillors to have, put it into a separate document for distribution with your presentation.
10. **Practice before you present.** Never give a presentation without practicing at least once to be sure that it will fit into the time you are allowed and that you know how to move from one point to the next. Include your visual aids in your practice.

Closed Meetings

Committees and Council deal with a variety of issues, including personnel matters (including labour relations and contract discussions), property purchases, legal actions and legal advice relating to these issues. While all meetings are open to the public, according to the "Municipal Act, 2001", these specific issues are allowed to be discussed by Councillors in "Closed" meetings. Often these meetings take place outside of Council Chamber, but if they are to be discussed in a public meeting space, the media and other members of the public will be asked to leave the room. When confidential discussion is complete, all others will be invited back into the room for the remainder of the meeting.

Accessibility

Committee and Council agendas on the Region's website are made available in a format which can be read by accessibility screen readers. Printed agendas are produced according to "Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act" (AODA) standards.

Council Chamber is equipped with an infrared system to enhance sound for the hearing impaired. The system is active during all Committee and Council meetings and can be accessed through the use of headphones borrowed from a Council/Committee Support Assistant. If you need to make use of this equipment please contact the Clerk's office before the meeting at 519-575-4400 or regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Parking for those with Accessible Parking Permits is available on Level P2 of the underground parking garage at 150 Frederick Street. An elevator is available to use from all parking levels as well as from the main floor to access Council Chamber on the 2nd floor. If you have any special needs or have questions or concerns regarding your own accessibility requirements, please contact the Clerk's office.

Other Information

- Parking is available:
 - During the day there is a fee for all parking. For meetings occurring during evening hours (after 4:30 p.m.) parking at 150 Frederick Street is available at no cost
 - Metered parking under Regional Headquarters at 150 Frederick Street (enter from Frederick Street) on level P2
 - Pay parking under the Kitchener Library (enter from Queen Street or Otto Street)
 - Pay-and-Display behind Regional Headquarters (enter from Ahrens Street)
 - Metered on-street parking is available on side streets off of Queen Street behind 150 Frederick Street
- Cafeteria is located at 150 Frederick Street on the 1st floor; hours of operation are:
 - Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Breakfast available 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.
 - Lunch available from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.
- Vending machines are located on the 1st floor, to the right of the cafeteria entrance
- Telephones are located on the 1st floor, to the left of the cafeteria entrance
- Public Washrooms are located on both the 1st and 2nd floors; there is a Family Washroom available on the 1st floor near the Security Desk
- Drinking fountains are available on both the 1st and 2nd floors
- Security Desk is located in the lobby on the 1st floor