Region of Waterloo
Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan
2018–2022
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A Message from the Regional Chair

Dear Friends,

Regional Council is pleased to present the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018–2022 for the Region of Waterloo. The Plan outlines the organization’s strategy for identifying, preventing and removing barriers to programs and services and to meeting the requirements of the “Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act”, 2005.

The Region’s Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan was created in consultation with staff from across the Region, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC), as well as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group.

Achievements from 2017 include:

- Launched job specific online accessibility training for Regional staff;
- Piloted the Region’s Welcoming Spaces tool in the Elmira Children’s Centre and new Family Centre;
- Launched new Diversity and Inclusion training for staff and management entitled, “Beyond Diversity: Putting Equity and Inclusion into Practice”;
- Conducted a learning event for Regional staff about supporting our Muslim co-workers and colleagues, facilitated by the Coalition of Muslim Women; and
- Commenced an audit of Regional facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with the highest occupancy and public visitors.
Throughout 2018–2022, the Region will continue to meet its requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and implement other key actions to further equity and inclusion. Some of the priorities for 2018 include:

- Implement the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool in the Region of Waterloo’s public facing buildings to ensure that the greatest proportion of people who need or want to use Regional services can access those services in a respectful way;
- Complete the implementation of the Region’s Interpreter and Translation guidelines;
- Address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #57: Educate Regional staff about “the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and the Indigenous-Crown relations”; and,
- Implement, communicate and train relevant staff on the Region’s Accessible Design Standards.

Additionally, Regional Council and staff will continue to consult with key stakeholders including the GRAAC and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion stakeholder group to create policies and processes for achieving accessibility and inclusion.

I hope you will take some time to review our Multi-Year Plan in its entirety. We welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,
Ken Seiling
Regional Chair
Acknowledgments

Region of Waterloo staff developed the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (2018–2022) in cooperation with the members of the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group. Special thanks to everyone who participated in the planning process, including the Region of Waterloo staff members involved in implementing the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standard; the Corporate Leadership Team as the corporate champions for inclusion; and to Regional Council for their ongoing support.

**Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee**
The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) advises Regional Council and staff members on ways to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities in Regional services, programs, and facilities. Members of the GRAAC are appointed by Regional Council and by the Councils for the Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo, and the Townships of Wilmot, Wellesley, Woolwich, and North Dumfries, all of which also seek the advice of GRAAC in matters of accessibility. Representatives from GRAAC sit on other Regional committees and groups like the Accessibility Fees for Taxi’s Committee, the Moving Forward stakeholder panel (Region’s Transportation Master Plan), and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.

**Voting members in 2017:** Rob Bender; Canadian Hearing Society; Carizon; Keri Cameron; Dawn Clelland; Sharon Giles; Donna Hartzler; Jolene McDonald; Greg Moore; Brenda Robinson; Paula Saunders; Mike Shipley; Carrie Speers; Andrew Tutty.

**Non-Voting members:** Municipal Councillors: Sue Foxton, Councillor, Region of Waterloo; Yvonne Fernandes, Councillor, City of Kitchener; Bob Mavin, Councillor, City of Waterloo.

**Municipal staff representatives:** Gina Hickman, Region of Waterloo; Lolita Paroski, City of Kitchener and City of Waterloo; Ashley Sage, Township of North Dumfries; Amy Black, Township of Wellesley; Dawn Mittelholtz, Township of Wilmot; Jeff Smith, Township of Woolwich.
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group
The Region formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group to get input and advice on the Multi-year plan and the Region’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. The group consisted of twelve members with lived experience in one or more of the areas below, or agency representatives from organizations related to one or more of the sectors below:

a) Ethnocultural and linguistic diversity: Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre;
b) Newcomers and or refugees: Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership;
c) First peoples: Waterloo Region Academic Advisory Committee;
d) LGBTQ people: Rainbow Community Council;
e) People with disabilities: Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee;
f) Seniors/Older adults: Community Support Connections;
g) People living with low income/People experiencing poverty: Employment and Income Support Advisory Committee;
h) Post-secondary students: Student, University of Waterloo;
i) Faith-based diversity: Interfaith Grand River;
j) People experiencing homelessness: Participant Advisory Group;
k) People with mental health issues: Threshold Supports.

The group helped identify and prioritize actions for the Multi-year plan. They will continue to provide input and advice to assist staff in implementing actions.
Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion at the Region of Waterloo

The Region of Waterloo is committed to creating inclusive programs and services, served by a diverse workforce that reflects the community. By removing barriers to services and programs across the Region of Waterloo and in the workforce, the Region recognizes the strength that comes with difference and the importance of creating conditions for people to realize their full potential.

This commitment to diversity and inclusion will be realized by engaging and supporting employees to create a satisfying customer experience to those we serve. The Region recognizes that a satisfying service experience improves the quality of life for customers, and helps to secure their trust and confidence in the work that we do.
Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2012–2015)
The Region of Waterloo developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2012 in response to public input received through the 2011–2014 Strategic Planning process. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy was three years in length with both short and long term activities that were measured and reported on annually. Some of the main achievements of the Strategy include:

• Met requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR, O. Reg. 191/11).
• Conducted 11 Dialogues on Diversity to create awareness on particular areas of inclusion and to foster dialogue between staff and community.
• Created communications to celebrate the diversity of our workforce and customers.
• Launched tools and resources to help staff identify, prevent and remove barriers to service.
• Established Quiet Rooms in 150 Frederick Street, 99 Regina Street South and 20 Weber Street to meet the spiritual needs of Regional staff during the workday.
• Piloted interpreter and translation guidelines with accompanying tools (e.g. Language Line).

Remaining Challenges
The journey to inclusion is continuous and ever evolving. The demographics of the community are constantly changing, presenting new opportunities and challenges for the Region as an organization. Current data on the diversity in our community is not always available, so staff are tasked with finding ways to understand the needs of the community through meaningful and appropriate engagement. In addition, the increasing number of retirements creates a need to tap into diverse talent pools to fill skill gaps and plan for the future.

About Waterloo Region
Waterloo Region, located in Southern Ontario about 100 kilometers west of Toronto, is made up of the three urban cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo and four rural townships of North Dumfries, Wilmot, Woolwich, and Wellesley. Waterloo Region has a combined population of 583,500¹, including post secondary students. It is one of the fastest growing regions in Southwestern Ontario and the current population is expected to reach 729,000 by 2031².
In addition to the growing numbers, the community is becoming increasingly diverse. Below is a high level summary on the diversity of the community:

- According to the 2016 census, 22.6% of residents identified themselves as being or having been an immigrant or permanent resident. This number is up slightly from 22.3% in 2006 and 22.3% in 2011.

- Over 1800 Syrian refugees arrived in Waterloo Region between November 2015 and January 2017. A significant proportion of recent arrivals are families. Historically, arrivals have been a mix of singles and families.

- Between 2011 and 2013, an average of 80 people per year filed their claim for refugee status in Waterloo Region. So far in 2017, local settlement providers report 400+ arrivals, a 400% increase in the number of claimants filing applications in Waterloo Region four years ago.

- The population aged 65+ is projected to double in the next 20 years.

- According to the 2016 census, 19% of residents identified themselves as being a visible minority. The “visible minority” population is projected to reach 30% of the total population by 2031.

- The local community has indicated that census reports on the numbers of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples in Waterloo Region are not an accurate representation of the community. National data indicates that the Indigenous population is growing rapidly, four times the rate of the non-Indigenous population. Local and national data indicates that the First Nations, Metis and Inuit population tends to be younger than the non-indigenous population.
The Region of Waterloo’s Strategic Road Map to Inclusion

The Region created a Strategic Road Map to Accessibility, as a part of the last multi-year accessibility planning process (2013–2017), required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11). The original Strategic Road Map was developed through public and Region of Waterloo staff input. The framework created is still relevant and as such, has been expanded to demonstrate how we will strive to be inclusive of the different aspects of diversity in our workplace and community.

Vision
An inclusive, equitable and accessible Region of Waterloo.

Outcomes
• The Region strives to remove barriers to accessing our public spaces to ensure that customers and staff feel welcomed and safe in Regional facilities.
• The Region of Waterloo strives to deliver customers and clients with services appropriate to their needs.
• The Region strives to meaningfully engage diverse members of the community for feedback and advice on Regional programs, services and facilities. Information provided by the Region to the public is accessible.
• The Region of Waterloo strives to recruit and retain diverse staff who feel that their knowledge and skills are valued.
Pillars
The pillars outline the Region’s approach to achieving the outcomes outlined above.

Policies, Standards and Guidelines
- Developing, reviewing and revising policies, procedures, standards of practice, guidelines and other resources to ensure high quality processes that address the needs of the Region’s diverse staff and customers.

People
- Supporting all Region of Waterloo staff and volunteers through training;
- Developing internal resources;
- Providing workplace accommodations.

Public Awareness
- Reaching out to the public, including the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group to seek feedback, advice, and to build awareness of the inclusiveness and accessibility of Regional services.
- Welcoming customer feedback and taking action to improve services.

Technology
- Using technology to support inclusion for the public and Regional employees, including hardware, software, websites and assistive technologies.

Infrastructure
- Improving the physical environment to reduce barriers for customers and Regional employees.

Foundation
The Strategic Road Map to Inclusion starts with a strong foundation in four key organizational elements: organizational commitment, accountable governance, coordinated approach, and meaningful participation.
Organizational Commitment
The Region of Waterloo’s leadership and Council have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility through their support of the Region Values, the Strategic Plan and the Accessibility Policy.

Region of Waterloo Values and Vision
Region of Waterloo is committed to five core values: Service, Integrity, Respect, Innovation, and Collaboration. These values guide the work of Regional employees as they achieve the Region’s vision to be a community where people matter and ideas grow.

Region of Waterloo Strategic Plan
The Region of Waterloo engages in a strategic planning process for each term of Council. The Strategic Plan describes a future view of what the Region of Waterloo is working to achieve. It provides a common focus for Council and staff over the next several years. The 2015–2018 Strategic Plan for the Region include five focus areas, two of which directly relate to inclusion.

• Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
  The Region will work with the community to provide quality services and programs to improve access to the supports that contribute to a healthy, safe and inclusive community.

• Responsive and Engaging Government Services
  The Region will strive to inspire public trust by engaging citizens and collaborating with community partners to foster meaningful and open conversations about Regional programs and services. The Region will attract, recruit and retain a skilled, engaged and caring workforce that delivers excellent citizen-centered services to meet the diverse needs of the community.

Accessibility Policy
The Accessibility Policy: Standards for Accessibility was approved by Regional Council in August, 2012. This policy demonstrates the Region of Waterloo’s commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of customers, in a way that is free from discrimination, protects the dignity and independence of all people, and provides equal opportunity and integrated services for people with disabilities.
Accountable Governance
Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion planning at the Region of Waterloo is based on the following principles:

• All Departments of the Region will participate in the development and implementation of the multi-year inclusion plan.
• Inclusion initiatives will make the most efficient use of available resources: human, capital, and financial, and will have clear leads assigned with the capacity and leadership support to implement actions.
• Inclusion initiatives will coordinate with and serve to enhance other Region initiatives.
• Inclusion initiatives will build on mandatory processes and existing commitments (Region’s Strategic Plan, Ontario Human Rights Code, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Employment Standard Act).
• Barrier identification, prevention, and removal activities will follow consistent best practices across Departments of the Region through the use of provincial standards and specifically developed tools.
• Actions to improve access will take into consideration the principles of Universal Design, which allow for the design of products and environments that will be useable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
• While developing and implementing the Multi-year Inclusion Plan, including the Multi-year Accessibility Plan required under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR), the Region will take into consideration advice received from key stakeholder groups, its Accessibility Advisory Committees, the public and Regional employees. Regional Council will consider the Plan for approval.

All employees have a role in creating and enhancing inclusion, and key individuals and groups are responsible for ensuring goals are met.

• Regional Council approves policies and plans required by the legislation.
• Corporate Leadership Team includes the CAO and all the Commissioners. They monitor inclusion initiatives, review accessibility policies and plans, and are responsible for compliance at the Region of Waterloo.
• **Diversity and Inclusion Executive Sponsor**, the Commissioner of Human Resources and Citizen Service, provides strategic direction and advice and monitors progress on equity and inclusion initiatives, meeting the AODA standards and other relevant legislation.

• **Internal work groups/Action leads** include key internal stakeholders responsible for developing and implementing work plans to remove barriers to programs and services, and meet the AODA standards across the organization.

**Coordinated Approach**
Inclusion planning across the organization is coordinated by Citizen Service, who is responsible for the following:

• Develops the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion plan, in consultation with staff and the community, including accessibility related actions to meet the requirements of the IASR.

• Creates and maintains the corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy and the Accessibility Policy, implements project planning and management processes.

• Coordinates feedback and advice from the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion stakeholder group.

• Provides corporate training and resources on equity and inclusion, and advises staff on removing barriers to programs and services.

• Measures progress, reports on compliance with the AODA, and coordinates compliance reports from each department.

**Meaningful Participation**
The Region of Waterloo ensures that key stakeholders are engaged in the inclusion planning process, in the implementation of the AODA Standards, and in identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to programs and services.

Regional staff developed the Multi-year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan in consultation with the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group.
Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (2018–2022)

The Region’s new Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion plan will help the Region be more coordinated, aligned and strategic in addressing barriers that exist in the workplace and in services. The actions identified through the plan will build on existing processes and where necessary, identify new areas of focus based on current community input and trends, with the goal of further integrating accessibility and inclusion into the way the Region provides service.

The planning process for the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion plan began with a review of existing organizational documents (Region of Waterloo Strategic Plan 2015–2018), and key legislation including the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, and the Employment Standards Act. From May to July 2017, Citizen Service conducted an internal scan of diversity practices, gaps and needs with leadership and staff. The scan included surveys and focus groups. Department leadership teams were invited to complete the leadership questions and were asked to select a sample of employees to respond to the staff questions (supervisors, subject matter experts, and direct service staff). There were 60 responses in total: 34 staff and 26 leadership responses.

The themes from the background research and internal scan were presented to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion community stakeholder group for further input and validation.

Action Plans
The four areas where the Region will focus our efforts from 2018–2022 are informed by the background research, community trends, staff and community input:

- Welcoming and accessible spaces;
- Access to Services;
- Communication and Engagement;
- Inclusive Workplace.

Actions under these areas will be framed by the pillars identified in the Strategic Roadmap to Inclusion:

- Policies, Guidelines and Standards
- People
- Public Awareness
- Technology
- Infrastructure

Each area contains actions to meet our requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Appendix A contains a chart with an overview of all deliverables.
Welcoming and Accessible Spaces

Our commitment
The Region of Waterloo is committed to ensuring that our customers and staff feel welcomed and safe in Regional facilities. The Region strives to remove barriers to accessing our public spaces.

To meet the requirements set out in the Design of Public Spaces Standards, the ways in which the provisions of the standard have been incorporated into Regional processes, including procedures used for preventative and emergency maintenance and service disruptions, are detailed in Appendix B of this document.

Policies, Guidelines and Standards
• Implement the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool in selected Region of Waterloo public-facing buildings to ensure that the greatest proportion of people who need or want to use Regional services, can access those services in a respectful way. (2018–2020)
• Develop protocols to facilitate smudging in Regional buildings. (2018).
• Review the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards and complete deferred sections. (2018)
• Review and implement changes to the Design of Public Spaces Standard when enacted. (2019–2020)

People
• Train staff to support welcoming spaces: location of the barrier free washrooms, quiet rooms, signage. (2018–2022)
• Develop and deploy training on the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards to applicable staff. (2018)

Public Awareness
• Get input on the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group. (2018)
• Post information about amenities in Regional facilities on the Region’s website. (2018)
• Launch process to allow community members to borrow the set of banners about religious diversity in Waterloo Region. (2018)

Infrastructure
• Audit Regional facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with the highest occupancy and public visitors. (2017–2018)
Access to Service

Our commitment
The Region of Waterloo strives to deliver customers and clients with services appropriate to their needs.

Policies, Guidelines and Standards
• Complete implementation of the Region’s interpreter and translation guidelines. (2018–2020)
• Establish integrated service counters in the employment resource centres at 150 Main Street, 235 King Street and 99 Regina Street South where customers can have access to Employment and Income Support, Children’s Services and Housing Services at one counter location to provide more inclusive and coordinated services. (2018)

People
• Develop online training modules to coincide with the launch of Volunteer Guidelines, including reference to accessible customer service training for volunteers (2017–2018)
• Educate Regional staff on “the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous–Crown relations ”. (2018–2022)

Technology
• Implement a new policy in Community Services, providing direction for communicating with residents, tenants, clients, Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs) and health service providers by using email or text messaging to improve access for customers, particularly those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. (2018)
Communication and Engagement

Our commitment
The Region strives to meaningfully engage diverse members of the community for feedback and advice on Regional programs, services and facilities. Information provided by the Region to the public is accessible.

Policies, Guidelines and Standards
• Maintain an inventory of applications owned by the Region and develop criteria to prioritize accessibility improvements. (2018)
• Update Creative Multimedia Services’ intake process to make it easier for staff to request accessible videos. (2018)
• Develop consistent language for asking demographic questions in forms and surveys and create guidelines for use. (2019)
• Develop processes to collect, store and share data about diversity. (2018–2019)
• Review and implement changes to the Information and Communication standard upon enactment. (2018–2019)

People
• Deploy online training on creating accessible videos. (2018)
• Provide business units with tools, resources, and support from Citizen Service to ensure public engagement processes are inclusive. (ongoing)
• Strengthen awareness and education of corporate accessible information and communication standards with an intranet support page and intranet promotions. (ongoing)

Public Awareness
• Establish a diversity, equity and inclusion community committee to facilitate the meaningful engagement of diverse members of the community. (2018–2019)
• Identify and develop an approach to meaningfully engage with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples on relevant Regional issues and decisions. (2018)

Technology
• Launch the Region of Waterloo’s new corporate website, compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines. (2018)
• Create an accessibility resource centre, where staff can access software to create accessible content, and assistive technologies to test web content and websites, form a users’ experience. (2018)
• Explore new technologies to enhance communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing customers. (2018–2019)
Inclusive Workplace

**Our commitment**
The Region of Waterloo strives to recruit and retain diverse staff who feel that their knowledge and skills are valued.

**Policies, Guidelines and Standards**
- Create guidelines to accommodate gender transitioning in the workplace. (2018)
- Develop and implement a plan to acknowledge and celebrate diverse religious and cultural events. (2018–2019)
- Benchmark audit of disability management/return to work accommodation program to identify areas for improvement to inform a three year plan. (2018)
- Pilot new underfill language in the CUPE 1883 collective agreement which could help make new graduates and foreign trained professionals more competitive for positions (2018).
- Review and implement changes to the Employment standard upon enactment. (2019–2020)
- Develop cognitive demands analysis for identified high risk jobs. (2018–2022)
- Develop tools e.g cognitive functional demands to form to better communication between treatment providers for suitable accommodations to be provided (ongoing)

**People**
- Determine approach to consult diverse employees on corporate Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. (2018–2019)
- Determine strategy to collect data about the diversity of the workforce and use the information to inform recruitment and retention processes and inclusion initiatives. (2018–2022)
- Revise and refresh tools and resources related to inclusion available on the employee portal. (2018)
- Conduct a learning event to educate staff on Islamic practices and provide strategies for working with Muslim customers and colleagues. (2018)
• Conduct a learning event to support the implementation of the interpreter and translation guidelines. (2018)
• Conduct a learning event on serving customers with invisible disabilities. (2018)
• Create a manual for managers which will consolidate all policies and procedures related to employment equity, accommodation, etc. (2018)
• Deliver Bias Aware Interview and Selection Training to GRT Supervisors. (2018)
• Apply an equity lens to Corporate wellness programs to ensure the resources and supports provided to staff are inclusive (e.g. employee fitness centers). (2019)
• Create online modules on diversity and inclusion to offer more training options for staff. (2019)
• Launch “the Working Mind” across the organization to educate staff about mental health in the workplace. (2018–2020)
• Make Bias Aware Interview and Selection training mandatory for all managers. (2020)
• Keep staff updated on changing legislation (e.g. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act). (ongoing)

Public Awareness
• Participate in the planning and steering committee for the Global Skills conference targeted to new immigrants. (2018).
• Talent Management presents information about the Region’s recruitment processes the Experience Matters program, geared towards people on social assistance trying to get back into the workforce. (Quarterly)
• Talent Management participates on the Working Pillar of the Immigration Partnership Council (ongoing)
• Review and update interview and selection tools to incorporate best practices for recruiting and retaining skilled, diverse staff. (ongoing).
Accountability and Reporting Compliance

The Region of Waterloo has developed a corporate-wide work plan that is used to direct actions and support departments as they implement inclusion initiatives and meet the AODA standards. Each department receives resources and guidance from Citizen Service on how to implement actions related to diversity and inclusion, including meeting the expectations under the AODA standards.

Citizen Service collects each department’s report on compliance. Citizen Service will implement tools provided through the Office of Corporate Performance to monitor and track compliance. The compliance report will be filed with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario at their request.
A Final Word

Reviewing and Monitoring the Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan
The Region of Waterloo Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Region of Waterloo’s strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Feedback
The Region of Waterloo welcomes feedback on the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan, and on the accessibility of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

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150 Frederick Street, 2nd Floor
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4J3
Email: access@regionofwaterloo.ca

Availability of the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan
The Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan is available online at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/accessibility in the following formats:

• Accessible PDF
• Full-text Word

Alternate formats, including paper copies of the Accessibility Plan are available at no charge from:

Citizen Service
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Email: access@regionofwaterloo.ca
Website: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/accessibility
## Schedule A: Overview of Deliverables

### Focus Area: Welcoming and Accessible Spaces

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<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Implement the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool in the Region of Waterloo’s public-facing buildings to ensure that the greatest proportion of people who need or want to use Regional services, can access those services in a respectful way.</td>
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<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Develop protocols to facilitate smudging in Regional buildings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design of Public Spaces Working Group (with support from Citizen Service)</td>
<td>Review the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards and complete deferred sections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design of Public Spaces Working Group (with support from Citizen Service)</td>
<td>Review and implement changes to the Design of Public Spaces Standard when enacted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Train staff to support welcoming spaces: location of the barrier free washrooms, quiet rooms, signage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Develop and deploy training on the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Get input on the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Post information about amenities in Regional facilities on the Region’s website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Launch process to allow community members to borrow the set of banners about religious diversity in Waterloo Region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Audit Regional facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with the highest occupancy and public visitors.</td>
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## Focus Area: Access to Service

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<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Complete implementation of the Region’s interpreter and translation guidelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services (Departmental Services)</td>
<td>Establish integrated service counters in the employment resource centres at 150 Main Street, 235 King Street and 99 Regina Street where customers can have access to Employment and Income Support, Children’s Services and Housing Services at one counter location to provide more inclusive and coordinated services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Develop online training modules to coincide with the launch of Volunteer Guidelines, including reference to accessible customer service training for volunteers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Educate Regional staff on “the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous–Crown relations.”</td>
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</table>
# Focus Area: Communication and Engagement

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<tr>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Services (Departmental Services)</td>
<td>Implement a new policy in Community Services, providing direction for communicating with residents, tenants, clients, Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs) and health service providers by using email or text messaging to improve access for customers, particularly those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITS</td>
<td>Maintain an inventory of applications owned by the Region and develop criteria to prioritize accessibility improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Services</td>
<td>Update Creative Services’ intake process to make it easier for staff to request accessible videos.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Develop consistent language for asking demographic questions in forms and surveys and create guidelines for use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Develop processes to collect, store and share data about diversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Communications (with support from Citizen Service)</td>
<td>Review and implement changes to the Information and Communication standard upon enactment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Services and Citizen Service</td>
<td>Deploy online training on creating accessible videos.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Communications</td>
<td>Strengthen awareness and education of corporate accessible information and communication standards with an intranet support page and intranet promotions.</td>
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<td>Lead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Establish a diversity, equity and inclusion committee to support meaningful engagement of diverse members of the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Provide business units with tools, resources, and support from Citizen Service to ensure public engagement processes are inclusive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Nations, Metis and Inuit focussed Community of Practice</td>
<td>Identify and develop an approach to meaningfully consult with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Communications</td>
<td>Launch the Region’s new corporate website which will be accessible and compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITS and Citizen Service</td>
<td>Create an accessibility resource centre, where staff can access software to create accessible content, and assistive technologies to do user testing on digital content and websites.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Explore new technologies to enhance communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing customers.</td>
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## Focus Area: Inclusive Workplace

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Service, Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness, Employee Services</td>
<td>Create guidelines and accompanying resources to accommodate gender transitioning in the workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Develop and implement a plan to acknowledge and celebrate diverse religious and cultural events.</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness</td>
<td>Benchmark audit of disability management/return to work accommodation program to identify areas for improvement to inform a three year plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Pilot new underfill language in the CUPE 1883 collective agreement which could help make new graduates and foreign trained professionals more competitive for positions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources and Citizen Service</td>
<td>Review and implement changes to the Employment standard upon enactment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness</td>
<td>Develop cognitive demands analysis for identified high risk jobs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness</td>
<td>Develop tools e.g. cognitive functional demands form to better communication between treatment providers for suitable accommodations to be provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Determine approach to consult diverse employees on corporate Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources and Citizen Service</td>
<td>Determine strategy to collect data about the diversity of the workforce and use the information to inform recruitment and retention processes and inclusion initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Revise and refresh tools and resources related to inclusion available on the employee portal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Conduct a learning event to educate staff on Islamic practices and provide strategies for working with Muslim customers and colleagues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Conduct a learning event to support the implementation of the interpreter and translation guidelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Conduct a learning event on serving customers with invisible disabilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Create a manual for managers which will consolidate all policies and procedures related to employment equity, accommodation, etc.</td>
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<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Deliver Bias Aware Interview and Selection Training to GRT Supervisors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness; Citizen Service</td>
<td>Apply an equity lens to Corporate wellness programs to ensure the resources and supports provided to staff are inclusive (e.g. employee fitness centers).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Create online modules on diversity and inclusion to offer more training options for staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Safety</td>
<td>Launch “the Working Mind” across the organization to educate staff about mental health in the workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Make Bias Aware Interview and Selection training mandatory for all managers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizen Service</td>
<td>Keep staff updated on changing legislation (e.g. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Participate in the planning and steering committee for the Global Skills conference targeted to new immigrants.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Present information about the Region’s recruitment processes the Experience Matters program, geared towards people on social assistance trying to get back into the workforce.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Participate on the Working Pillar of the Immigration Partnership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talent Management</td>
<td>Review and update interview and selection tools to incorporate best practices for recruiting and retaining skilled, diverse staff.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
References

1. Region of Waterloo Planning Information bulletin: 2016 year-end population and household estimates for the Region of Waterloo.
2. Region of Waterloo Planning Information bulletin: 2016 year-end population and household estimates for the Region of Waterloo.
5. Refugee Claimants in Waterloo Region: September 2017 Update.
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