

2015



Bringing people together  
to encourage living actively.



# Stakeholder Engagement Report

## *A Review of the Waterloo Region Physical Activity Charter and Framework for Action*

Prepared for the Waterloo Region Active Living Network (WRALN)

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## Executive Summary

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The Waterloo Region Active Living Network (WRALN) consists of representatives from various sectors: government, public health, non-profit (local and provincial), private, education, community groups /grass roots, and individuals. The network envisions “a vibrant Waterloo Region where all residents are engaged in active living”. To further their vision, WRALN developed a *Waterloo Region Active Living Charter* and a *Framework for Action* to guide future policy work.

### 1.1 Current Environment

Within Waterloo Region there are already a number of policy initiatives at Regional and Municipal levels related to active transportation and active living. Some examples include: the Regional Transportation Master Plan (with *Walk Cycle Waterloo Region* as one aspect of the plan), the Active & Safe Routes to School initiative; the WRDSB’s *Active Transportation Charter*<sup>1</sup>; and the *Healthy Kids Community Challenge* that will be launched in 2015. Additionally, every township and municipality in the region has a specific mandate for active living (recreation and leisure). This landscape makes for a supportive but also a complex context within which to position the *Waterloo Region Active Living Charter*.

### 1.2 Stakeholder Engagement Process

The Network wished to expand the community’s involvement in this policy work and hired a consultant to carry out a consultation with key community stakeholders to:

- Obtain input on the draft *Waterloo Region Active Living Charter* (WRALC) and the *Framework for Action* (FA) documents;
- Explore potential policy actions; and
- Propose recommendations to WRALN on next steps to achieve endorsement and approval of the WRALC by regional government.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/Active-Transportation-Charter\\_WRDSB-only.pdf](http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/Active-Transportation-Charter_WRDSB-only.pdf)

### 1.3 Methodology

A stakeholder engagement process and protocol was created in partnership with a small advisory group representing WRALN. Eight focus groups were consulted (for a total of 71 participants) and five key informants (representing a mix of planners, a funder and a children’s advocate). The eight focus groups included a range of advisory volunteer committees, a neighbourhood network, a large recreational organization, and a private sector group:

- Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee, City of Waterloo
- Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee, City of Kitchener
- Active and Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee
- Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Waterloo Region Mental Health Work Group
- Cambridge Neighbourhood Organization
- YMCA of Cambridge and Kitchener Waterloo, Leadership Team
- For-Profit Focus Group

### 1.4 The Findings

Most of the participants appreciated the intent and the comprehensive focus of the *Waterloo Region Active Living Charter*. Everyone understood the need for an increased awareness of, and participation in, an active lifestyle. In terms of safe and healthy communities, and investments in health, it seems like a natural fit with the thinking and actions of many of the interviewees.

There were a number of questions, however, regarding the intended audience, the scope of the ideas presented, and whether a charter is an effective tool for change at the Municipal and Regional levels. There was concern about the clarity of the *Charter* and its lack of appeal to the general public. Some of the principles or goals seemed too lofty (such as targeting poverty) and they undermined the *Charter’s* potential to be meaningful for everyday living. There was also some concern about redundancy, given the other existing charters such as the “*Charter of Physical Activity, Sport, Recreation, Play and Well-Being for all Citizens in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada*”. Ultimately, respondents were not completely convinced that there is a need for another *Charter*. Participants did want to see a revised edition of the *Charter* but most people were not ready to endorse what was presented for discussion. The following quote is an example of what was heard,

“I see the point to it, (but) for me and for us to do our job, we don’t need this anymore. We have so many policies and charters that we quote every time we bring reports to council.”

The *Framework for Action* was better received due to the action items identified for each sector. The *Framework* prompted a number of groups to note the importance of a coordinated and integrated strategy to achieve a larger impact. The role of Public Health in facilitating this integrated strategy was mentioned a few times. Presented together, respondents could see how the *Charter* and *Framework* could be inter-woven to emphasize that everyone has a role to play.

## 1.5 Next Steps

### **Don’t Miss This Moment!**

A couple of people stressed that now is the time to plant the seeds for future policy work as the Municipalities, Townships, and the Region are engaged in creating their Strategic Plans for the next four years.

### **Create Tighter Linkages Between The *Charter* And The *Framework***

There is a readiness for a more coordinated response across the jurisdictions involved with active living. Participants suggested the *Charter* should be more engaging and the *Framework* should be *A Call to Action*.

### **Clarify The Role Of The Region Of Waterloo Public Health**

A number of respondents noted that Public Health had a very clear role to play, not as a driver, but as an enabler, and this should be visible in the *Framework’s* list of sectors. (Note: The research that has been conducted on “collective impact”<sup>2</sup> describes the importance of a backbone organization in collaborative initiatives.)

### **Share The Next Version Of The *Charter* & *Framework* With Focus Groups**

Every group wanted to see the next iteration of the *Charter* and *Framework*. Some of the organizations and networks would still like to consider endorsing the final product.

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<sup>2</sup> SSIR, Winter 2011. [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

## The Feedback – Key Themes

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The participants in this stakeholder engagement process provided a mixed response to the *Waterloo Region Active Living Charter*. The majority of respondents were pleased with the corresponding *Framework for Action* which demonstrates that every sector has a specific and complimentary role to play. Some respondents felt that the *Framework* should be re-named, *A Call to Action* and be better integrated with the *Charter* to highlight the goal of unified and collective actions.

“The *framework* is valuable because it makes links across sectors, across the continuum of times and places when people should be active.”

Positive feedback on the *Charter* emphasized its over-arching themes; the connection with current policies supporting trails, parks and transportation systems; and the fit with neighbourhood strategies. In general, the principles in the *Charter* were easy to support and it provided a common language to describe what was already happening across different sectors and programs. Some saw the *Charter* as a useful “leverage point to start having more conversations” with municipal councils and school boards.

“A charter is a good thing. People in Waterloo are not aware of how poorly we’re doing locally. A charter provides focus and direction.”

“The *Charter* has overarching themes that work as a unifier.”

However, despite the positive responses, there was also a great deal of skepticism about the need for another charter and the ability to accomplish substantive change through the endorsement of a charter.

“Everyone can get behind the idea of the *Charter*, but there’s the pragmatic consideration. So what? What are we doing with the *Charter*? The value comes in leverage...If there’s no teeth to this, it’s just good ideas we all agree with.”

Furthermore, respondents had a number of additional comments or ideas regarding the *Charter’s* principles and action points. The following themes and questions emerged from the discussions with the focus groups and key informants.

## 2.1 Why Do We Need Another Charter?

The majority of the respondents (key informants and focus group members) questioned the merits of creating and endorsing another charter. People expressed concerns about this charter's redundancy, given the other charters and initiatives that were already in place across the Region (for example, the *Region of Waterloo Pedestrian Charter* or the *Charter of Physical Activity, Sports, Recreation, Play and Well-Being for All Citizens in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada.* ). The following comments capture this sentiment.

“... We already have a lot of strong policy in place. Our challenge comes with making the rubber hit the road. Creating something that actually then gets done. Our cycling master plan has some really strong policy statements. That gives us our basis.”

“There are a lot of other initiatives and policies in place already; (I'm) not sure what the *charter* is going to help with at this point. We quote the *Region of Waterloo Pedestrian Charter* in every report we have.”

“Why do we need a charter? Why do we need a unifying umbrella? Why is this better than what is already happening?”

## 2.2 What Will Be The Impact?

The question of whether charters are effective vehicles for creating change was raised in every focus group and by several of the key informants. Many people asked the “so what” question. The following sample of comments from respondents shows that, in their view, charters:

- Are just words or a paper exercise that does not translate into action and accountabilities;
- Have very little leverage and tend to sit in a drawer;
- Need to be seen as just the first step of a very clearly defined plan; and
- Are helpful to reference in the preamble of a report but after that serve little purpose.

“The value of the *Charter* is to get an agreement for those of us who are working together collectively...but a charter as a tool to engage people or craft change, not so sure.”

“A charter is just words on a paper unless people use it and know it exists.”

“Often, when charters are created, there is lots of support for its content and intent, but it tends to stop there. Action doesn’t always follow. There would need to be something to ‘get legs underneath it’. What’s the end purpose? If it’s endorsed by council, what will that mean?”

“Will the *Charter* be presented along with a policy or a funding structure? Unless it does, it will not have an impact at the citizen level. Without these, it is just a list of ideas that we all agree are good. It won’t impact any change that will have an effect on people’s lives.”

“...Whereas something practical, like policies and by-laws with accountability would be more effective at getting people active. Put money on making sidewalks people can actually use, not on making a piece of paper to tell people to be active.”

### 2.3 Who Is The Audience?

Stakeholders indicated that it was unclear whether the *Charter* was intended to be written for the general public, other members of WRALN, politicians, or Waterloo Region as a whole. They noted the *Charter* needs to have:

- Clear Language that is simple and appealing (“*Need gems to speak to the audience*”);
- Practical and engaging action ideas for individual citizens rather than broad statements;
- Less detail (keep the details in the *Framework*) and a more tailored and compelling message for Waterloo Region and local organizations;
- More emphasis on children and youth; and
- Short snappy messages that the general public could rally behind.

### 2.4 Is The Scope Feasible?

A few of the stakeholders questioned the scope of the *Charter* and whether the goals were realistic. There was a concern that some statements are wildly aspirational. No one could disagree with them but “how we will know when we have made a difference?”

People were particularly focused on the statements captured under the “Invest in Health” Principle. They noted that targeting the root causes of poor health, such as poverty, is a complex issue and not a readily achievable goal. As one person said, “The scope is gigantic, which makes it difficult to act on the *Charter*.” They suggested more reasonable and specific goals leading to tangible action steps.

“Without these, it is just a list of ideas that we all agree are good. It won’t impact any change that will have an effect on people’s lives.”

## 2.5 How Do We Promote Inclusion And Equity?

Many of the focus groups paid attention to the *Inclusion and Equity* principle. They appreciated seeing it highlighted in the *Charter* and had a number of comments and additional ideas:

- New Canadians arrive in Canada healthier than they are four or five years later. Key barriers to physical activity and health include: the costs of recreational programming and rental fees; cultural barriers in terms of inclusive and safe spaces; and language barriers. The gym is an unknown concept to some and also raises gender issues (men-only or women-only gyms). Other issues include the accessibility of healthy and affordable food, mental health issues, and the many other priorities that take attention away from recreation.
- Low income residents walk, out of necessity, to the food bank or to work or to their children’s schools. In this case, individual needs must be met first; recreation for pleasure is not an option.
- “Move more, **sit less**” is offensive to someone confined to a wheelchair or scooter.
- There is a need for accessible pathways and broad sidewalks year-round. The use of wheelchairs, strollers, and walkers requires sidewalks that are shoveled in the winter, kept free of tree branches or other debris, and available on both sides of the street, even during periods of construction.
- Getting to a location in an active way requires accessible washrooms at the end of the route.

“In the point on inclusion, it doesn't talk about finding out what people actually want to do in terms of physical activity. People need to be engaged in creating their own healthy options.”

“As part of our focus on inclusion and equity, we interviewed quite a few groups that run sports teams. The biggest issue and challenge that they faced was the matter of space and accessibility of gyms and playgrounds... They could not afford it.”

“We are working to make programming (more) inclusive of families and people with special needs, and taking programming out to the community. We need to bring things to people, not just expect people to come to us.”

“People would be more active if we had more abilities to be active, rather than people sitting and talking about being more active. ...Money should be spent on things to make places more accessible to methods that are active.”

## 2.6 How Do We Make It Easy For Everyone To Be As Active As Possible?

People responded positively to the *Design and Planning for Movement* principle. They noted the importance of a built environment that motivates people to walk or bike because it is a more enjoyable choice and easier than driving.

“I was happy to see walkability and roads included. In my neighbourhood, children walk to and from school about two kilometers and they cross five lanes of traffic. I just think that was not well thought out and planned. I was happy to see walkability of roads addressed.”

Respondents had some additional, easy-to-implement ideas:

- When booking meetings, consider whether the location is walkable or has public transportation.
- If a meeting is over two hours long, build in a stretch break thus making it normal to be active.
- Appreciate physical activity as an important element of community capacity building and start neighbourhood run clubs or ball hockey games for all ages. Create something close to home for people with busy lifestyles and encourage neighbours to support each other to be more active.

### GARY'S STORY

One participant shared a story of a neighbour who had leukemia. During his treatments he continued to walk his dogs (and sometimes a cat) around the neighbourhood. As he became increasingly ill, he could no longer make it all the way around his route. His neighbours put chairs along the sidewalk with signs that said, “Gary’s Chair”, so he could take breaks and socialize during his walks.

## 2.7 How Can We Do A Better Job Of Engaging Children And Youth?

Everyone wanted to focus on how to re-engage children and youth in being physically active through unstructured play and activity. They liked the *Charter's* emphasis on trails, parks, and greenspaces. They talked about tobogganing, skating, running, and the ability to just roam outdoors through neighbourhood activities and family fun.

“In the past, unstructured, active play was the norm and we have since moved away from that for many reasons. Now we're seeing fewer parks, but larger parks. Neighbourhood Associations are doing programming, but just getting outside and playing and getting to know neighbours have been limited.”

People stressed the importance of children being able to take risks and experience the thrill of outdoor play. They noted that the plasticized playgrounds of the last two decades are shifting back to more natural playgrounds, like the ones designed by Evergreen<sup>3</sup>. These naturalized playgrounds can become an essential component of the school's outdoor curriculum. One key informant cited a study indicating that if children are not given opportunities to learn their own capacity for risk at an early age, then they will not understand their risk tolerance as teenagers.

“Adults who guide recreation of children need to be more comfortable with letting kids tumble and fall. In our culture, we emphasize preventing injuries.”

Respondents believed that there are many factors working against children to prevent active outdoor play and learning:

- A risk adverse society prevents children from participating in free unstructured play.
- Municipal policies and by-laws focus on reducing liability resulting in the banning of tobogganing and outdoor skating on City properties. Common sense needs to prevail - the City needs to make sure the property is safe and the individual needs to be responsible for assessing individual safety.

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<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.evergreen.ca/our-impact/children/> and <http://www.evergreen.ca/our-impact/children/greening-school-grounds/> and [http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish\\_kindergarten\\_gets\\_kids\\_moving\\_with\\_outdoor\\_programme/7794088](http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish_kindergarten_gets_kids_moving_with_outdoor_programme/7794088)

- Kids are not walking to school in walkable neighbourhoods because of a number of factors including: convenience and the time it takes for working parents to walk to school and back; a school's risk aversion to unstructured play in non-school hours; and safety issues with regards to vehicular traffic on nearby municipal streets.
- Afterschool programs need to be within walking distance.
- Children today are lacking physical competence and confidence.

“The last thing you want is that at Grade 6, a child is learning for the first time that it's fun to play outside. It's easier to create habits earlier on in life.”

Given the support for unstructured play, there were mixed reactions to the *Charter's* endorsement of more education and awareness and specifically the promotion of physical activity skill development in children. A couple of respondents were fully in favour of educating children to develop physical competence because:

- Skill development for children is important. In their youth, kids are not developing the physical skills anymore.
- Gym class is not meeting the need anymore because it is not frequent enough, the activities in gym do not teach those basic skills.

On the other hand, a children's advocate notes that many children are uncomfortable in organized sports and sums up her aversion to skill development with this statement:

“I feel that every time I see something promoting active living, it is severely missing elements of creativity and fun. Words like "skill development" make me cringe and have nightmarish flashbacks to running laps and doing field hockey drills in Grade 9. Nothing made me resent and avoid physical activity more than that. There needs to be more out-of-the box thinking. For example, in community design, building interactive art exhibits that double as play structures throughout the community is one way to get kids more active in daily life”

Ideally, people would like to see more family interaction with such things as bike friendly roads on the weekends, family runs, fun workouts, tobogganing, and skating. Safety will always be an important consideration but this can be balanced with the need for play.

## The Way Forward

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Some very clear suggestions regarding next steps emerged from these discussions.

### 3.1 Don't Miss This Moment!

A couple of people stressed that now is the time to plant the seeds for future policy work as the Municipalities, Townships, and the Region are engaged in creating their Strategic Plans for the next four years. Rather than waiting to work through a process of community and municipal endorsements, a couple of key informants strongly recommended that WRALN act immediately.

“The *Charter* is a missed opportunity in terms of the ‘ask’. How does a councilor make the connection to a strategic plan? Once approved, then what? And so what?”

“It’s timely – each Council is setting their strategic plans...Create the readiness now. Make comments about the priorities. Put the key messages in a letter and send out to members. Have a ‘Strat Chat’ at the Regional level. There needs to be a clear ask, ‘As a first step, in the next 5 years...’.”

### 3.2 Create Tighter Linkages Between The *Charter* And The *Framework*

Respondents commented that there is a readiness for a coordinated response across the jurisdictions involved with active living. It is time for organizations and government to stop working in a compartmentalized way and to become more accountable to common goals. They suggested that the two documents could be woven together in a streamlined fashion. For example, the *Charter* could quickly list who the players need to be, but their roles should only be explained in the *Framework*.

“The integrative nature of the *Charter* is positive. There are a lot of one-offs being done in the region, so being able to pull it all together in an integrated way is a good thing.”

“Integrative to me is also about coordinating pressure points and opportunity points. The challenge is to raise things up on the attention screen. How do we make this whole movement one of the top 3-5 top things?”

### 3.3 Clarify The Role Of The Region Of Waterloo Public Health

A couple of the groups questioned Public Health's role in the *Charter* and Framework. The involvement of Public Health was implied but not explicit. People felt that Public Health had a very clear role to play, not as a driver, but as an enabler, and this should be visible in the *Framework*.

"I always found that Public Health's one great forte is that you network across all sectors and all agencies all the time. That's something municipalities don't do. The *Charter* might be a great eye opener, and it might legitimize and reinforce public health's role in all of this, in terms of who the *Charter* reaches and who needs to be involved."

#### Author's Note

In the last few years, the concept of "collective impact" has caught the attention of many local and national organizations (such as Tamarack). Since the original article by John Kania and Mark Kramer appeared in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*<sup>4</sup>, the thinking about how we achieve substantive change in social programs has been disrupted and challenged. In the original article, the authors note that old model of funding tends to look at isolated impact.

"In short, the non-profit sector most frequently operates using an approach that we call isolated impact. It is an approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or replicate to extend their impact more widely."

Alternatively, a collective impact approach is proving to be successful in creating lasting change because of five factors:

- A common agenda and definition of the problem that is shared by multiple participants;
- Shared measurement systems;
- Mutually reinforcing activities;
- Continuous communication; and
- Backbone support from one organization to coordinate and manage the entire initiative.

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<sup>4</sup> SSIR, Winter 2011. [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

Much has been discussed and written since this article first appeared, including articles on the concept of backbone support.<sup>5</sup> The researchers have found that during the lifecycle of an initiative, backbone organizations:

- Guide vision and strategy
- Support aligned activities
- Establish shared measurement practices
- Build public will
- Advance policy
- Mobilize funding

The collective impact ideas and organizing principles would seem to align with the work of WRALN and the support provided to the network by Waterloo Region Public Health.

### 3.4 Share the Next Version of The Charter & Framework With Focus Groups

Every group wanted to see the next iteration of the *Charter* and *Framework*. Some of the organizations and networks would still like to consider endorsing the final product.

#### Next Steps - Effort/Impact Analysis

<p><b>Easy</b> to do and yields a <b>big improvement</b> (Go for it! Low hanging fruit)</p> <p>Revise the Charter to one page and use it with the <i>Framework</i> as speaking notes to hold conversations <b>now</b> with staff involved in municipal and regional strategic planning. Highlight the issues which could be considered in the next strategic plans.</p>	<p><b>Easy to do</b> but yields a <b>small improvement</b> (Go for it but do not invest as much time)</p> <p>Revise the Charter to be much more engaging and easy to read and send it back out to stakeholders with an invitation to share it widely.</p>
<p><b>Difficult to do</b> but yields a <b>big improvement</b>. (Start the planning &amp; first steps)</p> <p>Continue to engage the different sectors in an integrated “Collective Impact” approach to active living</p>	<p><b>Difficult to do</b> and yields a <b>small improvement</b>. (Avoid!)</p> <p>Obtaining full endorsement of the Active Living Charter from citizens, sectors and councils</p>

(Adapted from Ingrid Bens)

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding\\_the\\_value\\_of\\_backbone\\_organizations\\_in\\_collective\\_impact\\_1](http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_1)

# Appendix

## Appendix 1



# A Movement to Move Manifesto for Waterloo Region

***Vision: A vibrant and healthy Waterloo Region where all citizens are engaged in***

The *Waterloo Region Active Living Network* believes in encouraging physical activity, active play, and all types of movement throughout the day. We know that this will contribute to better physical and mental health, prevent chronic disease, and enhance social connections and quality of life. Our vision includes the promotion of movement (any movement!) at every opportunity through: 1) the design and planning of neighborhoods, workplaces, and public spaces; and 2) the engagement of children, adults, and families in active living to support their full potential for learning, working, and playing.

***Everyone has a role to play!***

***To achieve this vision, we call for all levels of government, educational institutions, neighborhood associations, civic groups, and individual citizens to work collaboratively to reach this shared goal through these principles.***

### **1. Commit to Getting Everyone Moving**

- Let's incorporate movement in all aspects of our lives, including: work, active modes of transportation, daily life, school, and leisure time

### **2. Make it easy to be active**

- Bring back play! (In parks, on trails, in naturalized playgrounds and greenspaces)
- Promote the options for physical activity such as neighbourhood fun runs, ball hockey challenges, gardening, walking or cycling to work, climbing stairs, or *walking meetings*.

- Increase the physical competence and confidence of children to ensure that they have the capacity to be active throughout their lives

### **3. Be Inclusive**

- Support free and low-cost options for active living such as accessible public spaces for play, hiking or walking trails, as well as accessible organized recreation, programming and washrooms.
- Ensure a variety of opportunities exist that allow all individuals to easily participate in active living without barriers.

### **4. Design and Plan for Movement (at all levels of government)**

- Design, plan and invest in neighborhoods, public spaces, greenspaces, parks, roads and communities which encourage active living through walking, cycling, running, skating, playing...



# A **Movement to Move** for Waterloo Region. A Call to Action!

*We envision a **vibrant and healthy** Waterloo Region where all citizens are engaged in active living*

## Purpose

This **Call to Action** outlines the building blocks of how the **Movement to Move** can and should be used to increase residents' levels of physical activity and address causes of sedentary behaviour/inactivity. It provides a common tool across all sectors to plan, develop and implement **an integrated approach** for physical activity programs, services, and supportive environments to increase movement and physical activity options in Waterloo Region.

## Framework Building Blocks

To ensure that the **Movement to Move** takes hold in Waterloo Region, the Waterloo Region Active Living Network (WRALN) is calling upon citizens and all sectors — Regional government, Municipal governments, academic institutions, non-profit sector, private sector, community groups, and funders— to work together in concerted actions across key areas:

1. Develop and implement a Waterloo Region Action Plan for Active Living which will address individual, social, cultural and environmental factors.
2. Develop partnerships and collaborate under one banner to link new and existing initiatives, seek opportunities to integrate efforts, improve working relationships, address issues and barriers which prevent best use of resources, maximize existing opportunities and knowledge, and target high needs groups.

3. Introduce and implement policies, physical structure, and actions to support movement and physical activity across the Region.
4. Foster collaboration and commitment across all sectors to build community capacity.
5. Ensure active living planning and programming across all sectors get funding priority.
6. Adopt evidence based strategies that target the whole population as well as specific population sub groups, particularly those facing the greatest barriers.
7. Evaluate concerted effort to implement the Charter and its measurable outcomes, such as the implementation of the principles in the creation of new programs and policies, as well as larger impacts over the long-term.

## The Principles

1. Commit to Getting Everyone Moving
2. Make it easy to be active: Bring back for all ages!
3. Be Inclusive
4. Design and Plan for Movement (at all levels of government)

## Community Consultation: Overall Comments from Stakeholders about Sector Roles and Responsibilities in a Call to Action

### Overall Comments from Stakeholders:

- In the charter, under principle #2, “Education and Awareness”, there are points that speak to physical literacy. These recommendations are “bang on”. However, they are not included in the Framework to Action anywhere. Physical literacy is a new hot topic across the country, and there are numerous strategies and initiatives underway to address it. “That’s where I see a disconnect. **Another bullet [in the Framework] could be about making physical literacy a priority at the same level as numeracy and literacy.**”
- The roles and responsibilities of Public Health are missing on the list
- The Framework should reinforce that “We all have a role to play”. Active living does not fall into one sector on its own, should be clear and upfront about this message.
- Best part of the charter is that it shows the value of bringing “health” into the conversation

- The Charter (and Framework) might be valuable in showing linkages between all the different aspects of healthy living. So that things aren't seen in isolation. People might stop working in such a compartmentalized way. But this can be achieved in other ways, it doesn't have to take the form of a charter.
- "I like the term 'call to action' rather than a 'framework to action'".

### **Municipal:**

- Points #7 and #8 ("Develop local community capacity..." and "Promote community cohesion...") These two points are not clear, one group member was not sure what they mean. What can municipalities do around this? Because they don't have access to data about low-income neighbourhoods, it was felt this should be more of a regional focus. But if the intent is to encourage work around access to recreation, then it needs to be reworded so it's more specific, and actually uses the words "access to recreation" and "supporting neighbourhoods through programming". Should make reference to the recreational granting mechanism (i.e. community grants).
- City of Kitchener is already doing everything listed in the call to action, under the section about municipal government.
- The charter (and framework) might "get lightbulbs to go off" when city staff read the action plan. Might see things that have been missed, might clearly identify for the municipalities

### **School Boards:**

- Calls to action for Board of Education should be more explicit
- Under "Board of education", Bullet #1 ("Support physical activity..."), it was identified that Board of Education has an active transportation charter, and they need to start taking responsibility for active transportation. Would like to see active transportation on par with bussing. Would like to see school boards addressing student transportation comprehensively, not just providing bussing.
- The school board's charter has been created but it does not have a lot of legs. School boards have used it to influence site plans for facilities (e.g. adding showers for staff, adequate bike storage, etc). These are being incorporated into plans on a go-forward basis, not retroactively. So it will take a long time for the charter to really influence policy.
- "Just having something in there that admits that [school boards] have some responsibility for active transportation, helps to make sure it pays off"
- School boards have a position called "Student Transportation Services" which is a position that straddles both boards. Active transportation should have a bigger

role in this. Maybe that means they need more funding to have a position in place to promote active transportation.

- Anybody who isn't being bussed to school is assumed to be a walker, so the city needs to provide enough facilities to support them, eg. crossing guards, signage, trails, access, maintenance, etc. They have an active transportation plan, and it affects the municipalities. Active and Safe Routes to Schools is advocating to create resources for the walkers. Crossing guards is a municipal responsibility.
- Municipalities are very supportive of increasing the number of students walking to school, even if that means more work for them. Because that means we are reducing the amount of vehicular traffic that schools create. Municipalities would much rather deal with pedestrian traffic than vehicular traffic. School boards need to do programming that promotes active and safe transportation to school.
- School boards are very serious about bussing because they are ultimately responsible for students on the bus. They are liable. So they make decisions based on that. When it comes to everybody else (those who are not bussed), there's limited interest because from their perspective, what happens off school property it's not their responsibility. Their mandate is not as clear as it relates to that role, so they're not as concerned about safety.
- This issue represents one of the reasons why school boards don't do programming for active transportation. Because if they promote a walking school bus, they are assuming liability even though it's happening off the school grounds.
- Some schools close their parking lots to vehicular traffic, which creates more traffic on the roads. Some schools have policies that JK and SK students need to be walked to the front door of the school by a guardian, which means parents have to park on the side streets, which blocks up traffic. This is not a school board wide, or provincial policy, it's up to the discretion of the principal.
- This relates back to the point in the framework where regional governments have a responsibility to "Review existing by-laws to determine whether they encourage or discourage active living..." – the school boards should have this responsibility as well to look at their own policies to see if they discourage active living. And include policies as well (such as those at the discretion of the principal), not just by-laws.

## **Townships**

- Townships might have a harder time because they have a smaller workforce, they might not have the same issues. They may also perceive that most of these things are being looked after by the Region.

## Proposed Roles and Responsibilities (to be consulted with stakeholders)

The WRALN proposes to use *the Movement to Move Manifesto for Waterloo Region* and this *Call to Action* to start the conversation with stakeholders about increasing levels of physical activity in Waterloo Region. The following are examples of roles and responsibilities by sectors that can be modified upon discussion with each sector.

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
Region of Waterloo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a leadership role and champion an active living strategy to ensure the Region is walkable, socially attractive and activity-friendly</li> <li>• Focus on urban and rural planning policies and design guidelines that support walking, cycling, public transport, and physical activities with a particular focus on equitable access and safety</li> <li>• Develop and maintain opportunities for active transportation such as walking and cycling, discouraging car use and improving road safety <b>(could also be under Municipal)</b></li> <li>• Prioritize funding for improvements that support non-motorized modes of transportation such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic calming measures <b>(should be also reflected in municipal government).</b></li> <li>• Integrate physical activity into policy and planning decision making in all departments within the Region</li> <li>• Ensure road safety, and keep public spaces safe from crime and vandalism</li> <li>• Plan for an open space network that includes trails, elements of the natural system, municipal parkland and other green spaces, that links neighbourhoods, parks, and major activity areas in the cities <b>(not really regional responsibility)</b></li> <li>• Review existing by-laws <b>and policies</b> to determine whether they encourage or discourage active living in Waterloo Region <b>(also municipal responsibility)</b></li> <li>• Ensure Public Health and Emergency Services continues to support</li> </ul>

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
	<p>community groups working on promotion of active living activities in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Pedestrian Charter, which ensures that walking is a safe, comfortable and convenient mode of urban travel (<b>Municipal as well</b>)</li> <li>• Develop work place policies and provide employees and their families with fitness facilities and/or programs that encourage physical activity and active transportation</li> <li>• Support the WRALN and facilitate its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services	Roles and Responsibilities need to be included
Local Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work toward minimizing gaps in services and resources related to physical activity and recreational activities throughout life.</li> <li>• Ensure access to safe, affordable, convenient opportunities to physical activity, sports and recreation services for all</li> <li>• Integrate existing and future initiatives, charters and policies with the Waterloo Region Active Living Charter</li> <li>• Focus on urban and rural planning policies and design guidelines that support walking, cycling, public transport, sport and recreation with a particular focus on equitable access and safety</li> <li>• Link planning and transportation decisions with Regional initiatives that relate to physical activity</li> <li>• Provide web-based links to municipal physical activity policies, programs and services on the WRALN website</li> <li>• Develop local community capacity by focusing on provision of resources targeting inactive and low income populations (<b>not clear enough – what actions?</b>)</li> <li>• Promote community cohesion by bringing together people from deprived areas and different ethnic and cultural backgrounds by removing barriers to physical activity (<b>not clear re actions</b>)</li> <li>• Plan for an open space network that includes trails, elements of the natural system, municipal parkland and other green spaces, that links neighbourhoods, parks, and major activity areas in the cities</li> </ul>

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide end-of route facilities in the open space network such as bicycle parking, signage, water fountains, benches, washrooms, etc.</li> <li>• Explore ways to ensure affordability of sports for all, for example by reducing costs through use of school facilities, equipment swaps, etc.</li> <li>• Partner with WRALN and support its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Academic Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice, resources, and research to help grow the building of a healthy community through movement</li> <li>• Develop a community-based research agenda that integrates physical activity policies, programs and services</li> <li>• Develop a “speakers corner” or webinar educational support program that enhances the knowledge of physical activity</li> <li>• Provide support for research and evaluation in all phases of policy and program development based on the best evidence available</li> <li>• Promote research focusing on supporting physical activity evidence and best practices that assist in guiding policies and initiatives for all network partners</li> <li>• Provide leadership in creating community based learning opportunities for students in Health Sciences and Health Promotion course curriculum that promotes physical activity knowledge and growth</li> <li>• Support systematic evidence based evaluation and assessment of physical activity policies, infrastructure design strategies, programs, services and initiatives</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN and support its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Local Boards of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support physical activity initiatives within the school system and link with active living programming and services offered by community groups and neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Promote use of school facilities for after school activities with community groups and residents in the neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN and support its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Non profit sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to work in partnership with other physical activity providers in the Region in building a healthy community through all types of physical movement</li> <li>• Provide web-based links to programs and services on the WRALN</li> </ul>

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
	<p>website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practices and success stories with partners</li> <li>• Strive to build staff capacity</li> <li>• Ensure own employees benefit from work place policies, programs and services that focus on reducing sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN to build a strong movement to promote active living in Waterloo Region</li> </ul>
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide web-based links to programs and services on the WRALN website</li> <li>• Share best practices and success stories</li> <li>• Become sponsors of special events to promote active living</li> <li>• Ensure that respected and well know business leaders assume positions of leadership promoting active living</li> <li>• Fund opportunities for leadership development for priority groups: children, youth, women, seniors, diverse cultural groups</li> <li>• Support and sponsor policies, programs and services that encourage active living for employees and their families at places of work</li> <li>• Provide funds, equipment and/or expertise for special events and projects for children and youth</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN and support its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Community groups/ Ethno cultural organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to work in partnership with other physical activity providers in the region in building a healthy community through all types of physical movement</li> <li>• Provide web-based links to programs and services on the WRALN website</li> <li>• Share best practices and success stories</li> <li>• Be the voice of the community in planning related to green spaces, parks, recreational services, etc.</li> <li>• Promote and support active participation in traditional and non traditional forms of recreation and physical activity within your neighbourhood, churches, ethno cultural organizations</li> <li>• Seek capacity building activity for community leaders</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN to build a strong movement to promote active living in Waterloo Region</li> </ul>

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
Sports and Recreation services providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to work in partnership with other physical activity providers in the region in building a healthy community through all types of physical movement</li> <li>• Support capacity building activities within specific target groups: inactive, people living with low income, ethnic minorities, new immigrants, women, seniors</li> <li>• Provide varying levels of competition: beginners, intermediate, advanced</li> <li>• Explore ways to ensure affordability of sports for all, for example by reducing costs through use of school facilities, equipment swaps, etc.</li> <li>• Ensure leagues build social connections to promote physical activity</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN to build a strong movement to promote active living in Waterloo Region</li> </ul>
Funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to work in partnership with other physical activity providers in the region to building a healthy community through all types of physical movement</li> <li>• Provide web-based links to programs and services on the WRALN website</li> <li>• Share best practices and success stories</li> <li>• Provide training support to facilitate building the capacity of Waterloo Region physical activity service providers to promote all types of movement in building a healthy community</li> <li>• Partner with the WRALN and support its development, growth and capacity</li> </ul>
Waterloo Region Active Living Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on getting the Region in SHAPE through Sharing, Helping, Accessing, Partnering and Educating</li> <li>• Promote all types of movement in building a healthy community through maximizing partnerships and collaborations</li> <li>• Build capacity for providers who promote and deliver physical activity initiatives</li> <li>• Share best practices and success stories that demonstrate how physical activity plays a vital role in the health and wellbeing of young and old</li> <li>• Advocate the momentum of the WRALN by working together in creating a vibrant Waterloo Region where all residents are engaged in active living</li> <li>• Advocate for inclusion and implementation of physical activity, active</li> </ul>

Sector	Proposed Roles and Responsibilities in increasing levels of physical activity
	<p>living, sports and recreation policy provisions in Region and municipal official plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the media to increase the education and awareness of Waterloo Region residents on active living and movement opportunities such as events and the availability of facilities and spaces, ensuring promotion of movement across the Region</li> </ul>
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to increase your own capacity to make informed decisions about active living</li> <li>• Advocate for policies, programming and resources to make active living activities accessible and affordable for all</li> <li>• Get involved with WRALN to build a strong movement to promote active living in Waterloo Region</li> </ul>