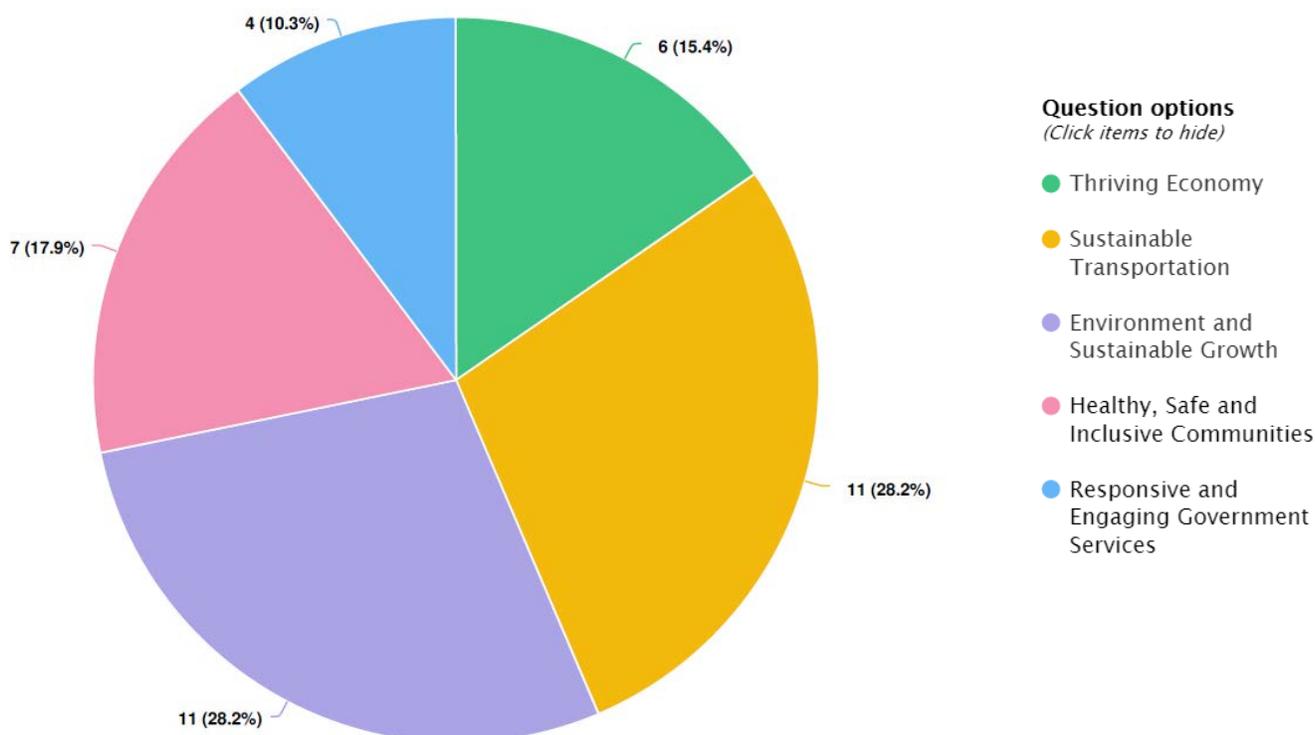# Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

EngageWR.ca Feedback on our draft priorities
14 July 2019 - 12 August 2019

ENGAGEMENT TOOL: SURVEY TOOL

PROJECT	SURVEY	VISITORS	CONTRIBUTORS ▼	RESPONSES
Region of Waterloo Strategic Plan	● Feedback on our draft priorities	146	38	73

Question options
(Click items to hide)

- ● Thriving Economy
- ● Sustainable Transportation
- ● Environment and Sustainable Growth
- ● Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities
- ● Responsive and Engaging Government Services

Thiving Economy

1.1 Create a business supportive environment to help attract new employers, talent and investments in Waterloo Region.

Participant responses

This should not come in the form of subsidies. The real issue is talent leaving the area because there is nothing to do here. We need to invest in cultural activities that give particularly the young tech industry something to do in their spare time.

Education is key to attracting new people. We have the universities, the college and a good education system. Technological companies are abundant so now we need the skilled workers to keep these companies part of our vibrant economy.

Businesses go where they can hire talented people. Sure, a business will never turn down a tax break, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient to convince a business to set up shop in an area. Access to talent is the only thing that truly matters. To encourage businesses, we need to make Waterloo region an area where talented people want to live.

Very important

1.2 Provide the infrastructure necessary to create the foundation for economic success.

Participant responses

We have the infrastructure already. I hear from companies 2 reasons they won't invest here: 1. nothing for employees to do in their spare time and 2. traffic to and from Toronto.

Start ups have been successful because we have the workers, the support of the region, and the leadership to share their expertise.

Public transit is essential infrastructure for this. We need all day 2-way Go trains in order to attract talent from Toronto. Make it easy for Torontonians to commute to Waterloo region when they are considering trying a job in the area. Make it easy for Waterlooers to pop into Toronto for a weekend concert.

This is what all levels of government should focus on. Setting the table for private industry to thrive.

1.3 Enhance and sustain arts, culture and heritage opportunities to enrich the lives of residents and attract visitors to Waterloo Region

Participant responses

This should be the priority. We have next to nothing going on for a region this populous.

We have many cultural events, many associations who will support and plan events.

While I greatly enjoy things like the KW Symphony, I think this objective is a "nice to have". I think this is lower priority than other efforts.

To attract people and their talents they need to want to live here.

1.4 Grow air service and aviation-related activities at the Region of Waterloo International Airport.
Participant responses
This seems contradictory to the goal of making Region of Waterloo most eco-friendly/sustainable region. Air service is extremely bad for greenhouse gas emissions.
Region needs to push through the NIMBYism that threatens to prevent the Region from taking advantage of the airport they have available.
Wouldn't be necessary if we had a high speed rail link to YYZ.
Expand the airport facilities with an eye to safety and noise control. Work with the neighbours to provide an atmosphere which will provide enhanced services.
Our airport has thus far been a collosal waste of money, and will likely continue to be so. While not enough to make up for all the bad decisions regarding the airport, one thing that would benefit business in the area is securing a flight offering between our airport and SJC (San Jose). Even just to SJC on Monday and return on Friday would be great, although daily return would be ideal. This would save tech employees in the area about an hour at each end of the trip.
If there were some sort of dedicated transport link between YKF and YYZ (or nearby transport link) it could provide two benefits: 1) make it possible to fly into YYZ and connect to a regional flight out of YKF (or vice-versa). 2) Provide an alternate transport mode for KW <-> Toronto transit for the southern half of the region: one with ample parking and easy in/out access (as opposed to downtown Kitchener GO/Via service).
Largest "low hanging fruit" opportunity we have in the Region of Waterloo. Treat the airport with as much passion as you did for the LRT and it will pay off...

🚲 Sustainable Transportation

2.1 Enhance the transit system to make it accessible and appealing to the public, and to increase ridership.

Participant responses

Agree with the idea, but I do not believe that Waterloo should solely rely on GRT. It would only create a monopoly, which wouldn't benefit the pedestrians, and the transit routes would only work to generate more profit, rather than improving transit efficiency for all.

I don't know what appealing to the public means - is that cost effective, quick, reliable, safe etc? I think speed is essential. I rarely take public transit because it's simply too slow

Make public transit free for all

I would love to be able to take transit to work, but it is terribly inconvenient currently. It's not feasible for us to give up even one of our two vehicles because of how slow the current system is. The new LRT is AWESOME and should be expanded with branch lines all throughout the region. We should take the bold step of committing $2-3 billion dollars towards this goal over the next 5-10 years. As a taxpayer in the region, I would gladly support a significant tax increase in order to accomplish this. Speaking of being bold, we should find a way to make our public transit significantly cheaper. Most people in this city will continue to own a vehicle - and certainly for myself, I will continue to do so - we have family and friends out of town, enjoy camping, etc. But I would take the LRT to work if it was faster and would save me money. Right now, with the cost of a monthly pass, it's cheaper and faster to drive.

The new LRT is clean and bright - we should take steps to make sure it remains exceedingly clean and well maintained.

An example of my situation, despite living near the core in Kitchener:
20 minute walk to the nearest LRT station + 20 minute ride to work (U Waterloo). I could take the bus from near my home to the LRT station, but it is actually slower than walking. On a good day, it takes me 15 minutes to drive. The worst case is 30 minutes. If the time could be down to 25 minutes, I would use transit every day.

Decrease fares, make ION free between DTK & Uptown Waterloo (ex. Calgary downtown), no more free parking (parking fees can subsidize transit).

Add more bus routes to suburban areas. I don't use transit at all because the service to my area is terrible (Lakeshore North). To get from my house to my work (UW) the bus route is slower than walking and approximately 4 times slower than cycling.

I am interested in seeing the ION running on University from RIM park to the Boardwalk.

Improving transit system includes increasing frequency of transit routes to make it a viable option for folks. A bus that comes every 30-minutes is not an incentive for someone to get out of their car. Also, the Region should be looking at free fares for youth under 12 - this will encourage families to use transit and will help those who cannot afford otherwise.

You need to clear the bus stops and sidewalks before commute time in the morning in winter.

Region is too focused on North-South transit. There also needs to be improvements/focus on East-West transit.

Better connection between Cambridge and KW, more access to bus routes along obscure side-streets.

Keep the cars off the road by looking at ways to keep the ticket pri as affordable with quick access from almost

anywhere in the region.

ION is a great start.

ION is terrific. Parking at the Conestoga end of ION is needed as people will park in the mall.

A long-term agreement with Conestoga and Fairview malls should be reached to allow free parking for Ion riders.

Waterloo Region has taken a great leap forward in launching the ION light rail system, and by implementing associated improvements to GRT bus service. The region is already realizing the urban intensification goals it set when it planned ION. Going forward, the Region should work to keep the momentum going by setting ambitious targets for ridership increases and mode shift away from personal motor vehicles. In addition to more frequent GRT service and better geographic coverage to reach more riders, the Region should look at gradually reducing fares to make transit a more attractive option. It should also strongly consider eliminating fares entirely for children 12 and under, for several reasons: It will help boost future ridership by normalizing transit use among young people; it will make transit more affordable for parents of young children; and it will remove what could be considered an economic penalty to parents of young children who choose not/can't afford to to drive a car. By "penalty," I mean that parents who have cars don't pay more to have their kids in the car when travelling, while parents who use transit are forced to pay fares for their children. Given that transit-using parents are often earning lower incomes than those who drive cars to begin with, eliminating fares for children 12 and under also makes sense from an economic equity point of view.

You need to clear the bus stops and sidewalks before commute time in the morning in winter.

Having Central Station be the new hub for all travel to/from the region in the near future with GO Transit being the main operator providing intercity service, easyGO fare cards should be replaced with Presto to better integrate and make it less hassle for passengers, Ottawa does not have any GO service but utilizes the Presto system. Townships need better bus service to allow access to the rest of the region without the need for taking a car. Route 77 Wilmot is very underserved with only weekday service at peak times, this doesn't allow for much time in the city to do anything and runs on the assumption everyone in the township has a 9-5 job where the bus would work. Increasing service to at least every hour like Elmira was, which has since changed to every 30 minutes plus Saturday service, is the least the region must do to better connect the region. We tend to be ignored in the townships, it's time we are connected with the GRT network with meaningful service!

With the changes to the GRT system with ION, I think that the cancellation of smaller routes that actually link communities is harmful. Further there are now greater risks to women, older adults, children and teens, and people with disabilities because they now need to navigate their own way farther to get to a stop. The other issue is that the cost of fares is very simply too high. The fare and the system caters largely to wealthier people. I would suggest a tax hike to reduce the cost of transit fares. A rider really should not have to pay 3.25 to travel. The cost is prohibitive which makes me wonder about the transit system being unaffordable to people who need it most. Another item is safety around stops in winter. I am quite concerned about the lack of snow and ice cleanup after snow and ice buildup. I've seen people fall, nearly slip under buses, and have incredible difficulty navigating the stops in the winter. There have been four-week long periods where snow and ice have not been removed. Addressing fares and safety at stops would increase ridership. On the positive I am supportive of the LRT and appreciate the bus drivers kindness and flexibility during the transition. I'm also impressed with your phone asssistance. I'd like you to pay attention to these more human details

I fully support this objective

Is it possible to make public transit free? At a minimum can it be free up to grade 12? Would it mean allowing advertising to pay for it or raising tax dollars maybe both. The benefit is creating a generation that looks beyond cars and less road infrastructure is required to move people on transit. A City for people, not cars.

2.2 Improve roads and rail transportation services to and from Waterloo Region.
Participant responses
But the construction should not take too long. Current constructions on LRT had destroyed many shops and markets, leaving significant damage to the market.
Yes please, including coordinated construction.
Faster more frequent Go Trains and/or Via Rail trains to Toronto are needed
Roads are still an important part of city and it will still be important to invest in this area. The region should work with the province to have a highway built from North Waterloo / Guelph directly to Toronto. Within the region, we should be a pioneer and set up dedicated roads for autonomous delivery vehicles. The use of roundabouts is good and this work should continue to be built. Can we figure out how to synchronize the traffic lights?!?
Two-way-all-day-GO
More trains and/or buses to Toronto would help . Look into allowing a low-cost bus company like Mega Bus to add service between Kitchener and Toronto. Greyhound is a too expensive and not as user- friendly as Mega Bus
Expand the Ion network laterally (University Avenue, Northfield, Colombia etc).
We need to focus on solutions to the 401 corridor.
There are a lot of un-used rail lines in Cambridge that could be re-purposed for the LRT
Highway seven needs to be a high priority. The rail services need to be better without all the stops in between. It takes too long and it becomes frustrating. I
Keep lobbying
Rail transportation in particular is vital.
I am in strong support to improvement of passenger rail transportation services.
Geographic directions don't work here. King St is N/S in Waterloo and E/W in Kitchener and all other streets similarly confusing. To improve roads decide on one set of geographic directions regardless of the fact that they are not really aligned with the compass. It would improve people's ability to find their way around. Recommend King Street is N/S and Victoria St is E/W.
The Region should continue – and step up – its advocacy for a more robust intercity rail network to move people between our region and other centres, particularly Toronto and Pearson Airport. The Region should also take a clear position that improvements to commuter and leisure rail service should take priority over road/highway improvements. One need only drive Highway 401 on any given day to see that the hundreds of millions of dollars pumped into maintaining and widening it over the years has fallen short of delivering safe and efficient passage of people and goods to and from Waterloo Region. The phenomenon of "induced demand" is powerfully demonstrated by the fact that additional lanes only bring additional traffic, rather than the stated goal of relieving congestion. This is throwing good money after bad, and is akin to trying to cure obesity by loosening one's belt: It doesn't work.

2.3 Increase participation in active forms of transportation (cycling and walking).

Participant responses

Waterloo should focus more on improving transit service for now. Increasing more direct transit routes, and schedule would definitely help, rather than making people cycle or drive. Waterloo does not even have a safe route for cycling at the moment anyway, and the constructions are killing the lanes. Thus, it only makes sense to fasten up the construction speeds, rather than creating more constructions.

Make it convenient to make this choice.

We need to build the infrastructure for this. There are some great trails that run through the region, and I would love to cycle to work when the weather is nice. Unfortunately, with aggressive drivers, it feels far to unsafe to cycle on the roads. People will take advantage of bike lanes if we build a segregated network of trails through the city, while also considering the distance it takes to get from place to place (IE, not everyone wants the scenic route)

Protected & separated bike infrastructure, good East-West trail connections in Waterloo, "opt out" model on active transportation on road redevelopment ex. by default redone roads should be put on a road diet, get separated bike lanes, sidewalks and active transportation priority signals.

Add a bike lane on Weber Street. You have no idea how disappointed I was to discover this wasn't part of the plan when Weber was reconstructed to add the underpass. The Spur Line is great but doesn't go far enough

Make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Penalise drivers for stopping or driving in bike lanes. I am a confident cyclist (ex bike racer) and there are still designated bike routes in the city I would never ride because they are dangerously designed. Offer more separate bike routes e.g. laurel trail, iron horse trail and a lot more people will cycle.

Segregated bike lanes. Make it safe. Do it now. No more deaths, please.

Prioritize infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists ahead of cars: these are the more common and accessible forms of transportation. Cars should not take priority.
This is too weak as-is.

See comment on 2.4 below. We need to build infrastructure to attract new users, and reduce vehicle speeds & restrict turning movements to increase participation in active transportation.

Infrastructure, infrastructure, infrastructure. The services in Waterloo are terrible for both pedestrians and cyclists.
Example: Pedestrians: there are too many intersections where they light won't favour the pedestrian until they press the button. This means if you *just* miss the light change (which happens often), then you have to wait through 3 sets of lights just to cross the road. Default to always giving the pedestrian the walk signal and de-prioritize cars. Similar goes for when a pedestrian presses the button and has to wait through an advanced green. A pedestrian waiting to cross should cancel any car prioritization altogether and let the pedestrian cross. More needs to be done at roundabouts to teach/ enforce pedestrian and cyclist safety.
Cycling infrastructure is a patchy mess in this city, and not enough enforcement is done to keep cars from parking or stopping in cycle lanes. Community mailboxes should be moved off streets that have cycle lanes because cars frequently stop in the cycle lane while they are picking up their mail.

Easier access to ride-share bike programs.

Improved bicycle paths but the biggest thing is to educate both the bicycle and car drivers to k now the rules and obey them.

better signage and measures to link existing trails

Design roads for walkers and cyclists FIRST, cars second.

The region seems to be off to a good start into this improvement area. Please keep at it and build more momentum in the design and implementation process.

The region can be a city in which a car-free lifestyle can be adopted by a good amount of people, however convenience for all aspects of cycling (trails, accessibility, convenience, safe storage, seamless travel) still can be improved significantly. The suburbs should not be left out of this development.

With new forms of shared bicycles and scooters, could we create more stations that are closer to homes so that the time from front door to the ION or bus stop is shorter.

Existing bike lanes tend to follow very busy arterial routes and do not feel safe due to large construction traffic and buses. A secondary network of implicit (but well signed) paths through residential neighbourhoods would encourage more cycling.

Speaking of induced demand, Waterloo Region has tremendous opportunity to induce the right kind of demand, by expanding facilities for active transportation: walking and cycling. It is now well-established that protected, segregated and well-maintained *networks* of cycling and walking facilities lead to increased use of those forms of transportation, just as well-paved and maintained roads lead to increased use of cars. Given the correlation of car use to negative outcomes (GHG emissions that contribute to climate change; health impacts from airborne pollutants, collision injuries/deaths, sedentary lifestyle that accompanies driving; the ongoing costs of road construction and maintenance; decreased liveability for residents who live beside busy roads due to noise, fumes, etc.), the Region has a huge opportunity to change the narrative by giving greater priority to modes of transportation linked to more positive outcomes. Aside from health, environmental and social benefits, there are compelling *economic* arguments in favour of giving greater priority to active transportation. One of those arguments is talent attraction and retention. While many longtime residents might not see it, Waterloo Region is in a global competition for top technology talent, which is a key driver of our local economy. If we want to attract and retain the best people, we need to offer compelling reasons to live here: namely, a liveable, vibrant, healthy and forward-looking community where it's easy to get around without a car.

More garbage receptacles would be great to get people walking and cycling. Such garbage cans and their emptying raises costs. So be it.

I think that we have made great progress on this front but that we need to continue to build the infrastructure to create connected and safe cycling trails and sidewalks in order to increase participation

I am impressed with the changes that have happened through the years and believe it should continue. As roads are replaced bike lanes should be added and continue to interconnect with existing bike lanes creating a bike lane network. A step farther would be to create a dedicated bike lane network through the city like the Iron Horse Trail.

2.4 Improve road safety for all users/drivers, cyclists, pedestrians.
Participant responses
Would agree to the idea, if there were faster constructions.
Queen st. bike path should go all the way downtown
- Segregated cycle lanes - Less focus on policing things like speeding, more focus on dangerous driving (texting). There is a lot of amazing dangerous driving in the city and it seems to be getting worse. Roundabouts are a great way to slow people down, especially in residential areas.
Bike lanes on Regional roads disappear at intersections, the most dangerous parts of the road network. The Region should design intersections to be safe for all residents, including those riding bikes, and provide protected infrastructure even in intersections. In the cities, there are long stretches of Regional roads with no safe places for pedestrians to cross. They divide our neighbourhoods and put residents in danger. The Region should install more pedestrian crossing infrastructure on Regional roads in the cities. Intersections of Regional roads have wide turning radii and long, poorly visible crosswalks. At intersections of Regional roads, I frequently experience turning vehicles failing to yield when I cross as a pedestrian with a walk signal. The Region should design intersections to be safe for all residents, even those walking, by reducing turning radii, adding more protected medians to reduce crosswalk length, making crosswalks wider and more visible, changing traffic signals for pedestrian safety, etc.
Speed enforcement, driver education, leading pedestrian intervals at lights, priority for active transportation users at trail crossings.
Fix the potholes
More separated bike lanes and dedicated lights for bikes at junctions.
We need bicycle centered infrastructure and laws. "Cyclist kills driver in SUV" said nobody ever. "Cars" do not care. "People driving cars" and treating people on bicycles as "inconveniences", or designing infrastructure that does not prioritize the protection and interests of the most vulerable users should be a crime. Why is my 11 y.o. son legally required to "share" the road with tractor trailers going 60+ km/h? I charge the those who prioritize the "car" with child endangerment. No joke.
It will be imperative for Regional staff to understand that in order to achieve this goal, it may "inconvenience" some drivers. For too long we have pandered to the express needs of the automobile - slip lanes, wide roads, and beg buttons for pedestrians. The Region and staff need to fundamentally shift how transportation planning takes place in the Region. This means protected intersections for cyclists, removing beg buttons from crosswalks, ensuring that multi-use trails have appropriate crossings, adding pedestrian crosswalks where warranted without be worried about the 'impact to drivers', and reimagining what our roadways are.
Slow traffic down! There's no shame in bringing all the 60 zones down to 50 zones. It would increase safety considerably. Red light cameras! Far too many cars going through red lights, particularly turning left. One car should be able to go, but frequently the lights have changed and you still get 3 cars turning--long after the pedestrian signal has been given to the pedestrian to start crossing. I've nearly been hit a few times. Likewise turning right on red--too many cars trying to "squeeze through" before the light changes, and leaving pedestrians to scramble back after they have already been given the walk signal. Enforcement needs to improve in this city. If any new cops are brought on they should be traffic cops. There are not enough traffic police in the city.
Get cyclists OFF THE SIDEWALKS. I'm tired of being hit from behind by cyclists not paying attention or not

giving me any warning that they're coming up behind me.

Need to put in separated bike lanes from vehicles. Cyclists are involved in too many accidents and "close calls". The Region needs to appreciate that cyclists have no protection from a vehicle weighting over a tonne if something happens.

Region needs to consider more signage on streets to remind drivers to watch for cyclists, pedestrians, trains, etc..

Sidewalk up-keep should be a priority

Too many young adults do not obey the rules. I gave seen youth go under the wags for the Ion. If you say something you get sass. Universities must teach respect for the law.

Get rid of the sharrows and develop more dedicated bike lanes

Cyclists and pedestrians are FAR more vulnerable than drivers - their safety needs to be the priority. Roads are already designed with drivers in mind- perhaps one change for drivers would be to design roads so that they are narrower, etc, so that people actually drive the speed limit rather than 10-20 km/h above the posted limit

Encourage bike safety at intersections. Many riders are acting like pedestrians and riding in crosswalks, entering in front of right turning cars. Bike riders have to use sidewalks for safety in places and if they are doing so need to slow down for pedestrians. Continue the good work on bike trails.
New work on King Street in Waterloo is dangerous for pedestrians as cars will veer right into the bike lane. Bollards are needed to protect riders and pedestrians.

It is not currently safe to cross the expressway, except at Lancaster, due to on/off ramps. A dedicated crossing for pedestrians and cyclists should be considered, perhaps at University?

This is so important, and again, an area where the Region has a great opportunity to change the public conversation and to lead positive change in our local transportation culture. Step 1 would be for council (and staff, at council's direction) to make a conscious, decisive and publicly visible shift away from the notion that users share equal responsibility for transportation safety. Simple physics exposes the faulty logic of such a suggestion. Motor vehicles, by virtue of their mass and velocity, pose a far bigger threat to people's safety than any other mode of transport – and that threat extends to all other road users (other motorists, pedestrians and cyclists). The increased risk posed by driving a motor vehicle makes it fair to expect drivers to carry increased responsibility for the safety of all users, but public discourse around these issues in Waterloo Region does not often reflect this fact. Decades of ingrained car culture, supported by tax-funded roads and car-centric land-use planning, have made driving a reflexive activity that most of us (and most North Americans in general) take for granted. Driving is still, for the most part, the most convenient way to get around for Waterloo Region residents. Unsurprisingly, some drivers feel entitled to use the roads with little thought for the needs – not to mention the safety – of non-car users, and can do so with relative impunity (for proof, you need only drive at the posted speed limit on a regional road and count the number of speeding vehicles that pass you). Simply put, the reflexive favouritism of car-driving over other modes has to change if we want to live in a safe, liveable and healthy community. Yes, it is important for cyclists and pedestrians to behave in a safe manner and adhere to the rules of the road. But it is just as important to acknowledge the fact that most of those rules came about because of the risk posed by motor vehicles, and would not be necessary if not for that risk. Western society in general has evolved to a point where we acknowledge that vulnerable minorities need protection. It's time to ramp up our acknowledgement of vulnerable road users (ie. pedestrians and cyclists) as a minority in our community in need of enhanced protection from the risks posed by motor vehicles, through adoption of Vision Zero principles and other measures, such as: increased budgets for active transportation (protected bike lanes, pedestrian priority at busy intersections, etc.), by reallocating funds from roads, if necessary; road and intersection design that discourages speeding and enhances safety for vulnerable users; reduced speed limits in conjunction with expanded police enforcement and greater use of speed and red-light cameras; public

education campaigns that acknowledge the danger inherent in driving motor vehicles and highlight the vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists. At a higher level, the Region (council and senior staff) needs to rethink the way it views transportation in general. Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the increased desire (especially among young people) for more safe, walkable, liveable and sustainable communities, we need to evolve from the traditional engineering view where transportation success was measured by "maximum vehicle throughput." We should come up with a new measure of success, based on moving a maximum number of people with a minimum amount of injuries and deaths, burning of fossil fuels and use of private, single-occupant vehicles. The region should also move more quickly and decisively to build a credible *network* of protected cycling lanes, and, as necessary, bring in an outside consultant to guide the process, since other cities have had great success in building such networks. The region is in a prime position to lead on this, if it chooses to.

Roundabouts should all have the cross walk lights that pedestrians can activate, there have been many times along Ira Needles I have either seen someone, or me personally almost hit a pedestrian at night because they were wearing dark clothing, and when navigating the roundabout with so much going on, these lights will allow all drivers to be fully aware.

I think you are doing what is reasonable here. I'd like to see increased police presence to halt and penalize drivers who violate rules.

I support the construction of multi-use trails, segregated bike lanes and wider sidewalks as a means to improve road safety for all users. Also I would strong recommend the Region re-evaluate how pedestrians and cyclists move across roundabouts and look into making changes to make those crossings safer.

More thought needs to be directed at cyclists and pedestrians navigating roundabouts. Roundabouts work well for cars. Pedestrian scrambles should be introduced to areas such as King Street and University Avenue to reduce pedestrian conflicts with cars.

Environment and Sustainable Growth

3.1 Become the most environmentally sustainable region in the country.

Participant responses

Why isn't composting available to apartment? it's also not at the Downtown kitchener community centre - is it at other community centre sites. Waterloo Public library last I checked didn't even offer recycling bins. Need a Clean and green day to pick up trash.

To do this, you need to greatly improve transit infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and the 401.
Follow the lead of the Dutch--they're doing things like making bus shelters green by growing on top of shelters.
Plant a lot more trees. There's lots of empty green space that isn't used for sport that could have trees on, including boulevards, cul de sac circles, etc.
subsidize turning parking lots into solar panel-covered spaces.
We get lots of wind in this region--invest in some wind power.

Work on getting rid of the plastic bags in stores and help residents find solutions and alternatives.

Compost pickup at condos, apartments and office buildings needs to come sooner rather than later

To achieve this, we will have to design streets and neighbourhoods so that cars aren't needed - current sprawl simply reinforces the need for a car

It can be good to use other Canadian regions as benchmarks for Waterloo Region. A study of what others are doing may be informative for us. However, in my mind, it is more important for Waterloo Region to achieve (exceed even!) its sustainability targets than to be in competition with other regions. It's a balance question -- what will best work to keep our eyes on achieving/exceeding our own sustainability targets in the most meaningful and effective ways possible.

This would make Waterloo Region one of the most desirable places to live in this country for myself.

We need to be both progressive and aggressive with our response to climate change, it's impacts and how to build resiliency within our region. At the moment the biophilic city planning and design principles and strategies appear to be the most comprehensive approach that considers the complexities of achieving resiliency while remaining mindful of all species and systems. Biophilic design among architects and designers acknowledges the power of nature. Biophilic cities are cities that provide close and daily contact with nature, nearby nature, but also seek to foster an awareness of and caring for this nature. Biophilic cities are also sustainable and resilient cities. Achieving the conditions of a biophilic city will go far in helping to foster social and landscape resilience, in the face of climate change, natural disasters and economic uncertainty and various other shocks that cities will face in the future.

I support this lofty objective

3.2 Protect the quality and quantity of our water resources.

Participant responses

Make sure that proper inspections are done to ensure good water quality.

I believe the region already does an excellent job in this regard, though perhaps more could be done to discourage water waste

Yes! The Region is one member of many human and non-human communities of the Grand River Watershed. No water, no life -- so let's do our best to protect the quality and quantity of the water resources we share (they don't belong just to us).

I am in strong support.

Biophilic city/regional planning addresses points 3.1 through 3.5 inclusive in a fully integrated and comprehensive approach. All of these separate points need to be addressed together in order to achieve true environmental resilience and sustainability - socially, economically and environmentally.

I support this objective

3.3 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Participant responses

- Make public transit free for everyone. This is the best way to encourage transit use and take folks off the road.

The region should have a goal of reducing all greenhouse gas use by 2040 at the latest. And until then have goals that should be achieved to wean itself away from fossil fuels. Even by 2020 a certain percentage of region vehicles should be electric

#1 thing is to get cars off the road. This means investing in non-car-related infrastructure and prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists OVER cars. Right now they are obviously subservient to cars in terms of infrastructure. You need to switch that.

The cap and Trade procedure was beneficial to the economy and environment. Make sure that companies that emit gas into the air pay for the new green initiatives in our area.

Electrify the region's fleet

Again, transportation options other than cars is the only way to make significant inroads here -

As part of the global effort to avoid reaching a temperature increase of 1.5 C, we need to embrace and implement renewal energy to reduce GHGs wherever and whenever possible.

This would make Waterloo Region one of the most desirable places to live in this country for myself.

I think that the Region should not just consider reducing corporate emissions but also how it can support and enhance reduced emissions in the broader community (e.g. continued investment in projects/policies such as Ion and Countryside Line)

3.4 Improve the Region of Waterloo's resilience to climate change and /or severe weather.

Participant responses

Region should consider increase storage capacity of stormwater. Can be used for collecting excess rainwater and also to supplement our region's water supply in times of drought.

Make sure the flooding plans are clear and encourage people to take part in the emergency plan.

plant more trees

Yes. The Tamarack Institute has been holding webinars for the past 1-2 years in which we have examined case studies of other communities' implementation of multi-sector, multi-actor plans to improve mitigation and adaptation to climate change and develop local (even neighbourhood-based) implementation plans in severe weather. The Region plays a key role -- I'm not sure to what extent regional coordination is already happening.

Adapt as needed and systematically planned for well ahead of time.

In particular, I encourage the Region's Planning, Engineering, Transportation and Facilities divisions to explore ways to do things differently to ensure we are prepared for climate change.

3.5 Preserve, protect and enhance green space, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands, and Regionally owned forests.

Participant responses

tree planting was cancelled on Earth day. tree planting offered to neighbourhood groups - why not be more inclusive and open it to everyone. Earth Day activities were few and far between. Again suggest a Clean and green day like London Ontario

What a crock--you're developing the little land we have left and it's going to single family homes. Densify, and stop building new single-family homes in waterloo region. It adds traffic and isn't environmentally friendly means of housing either.

Region needs to protect rural lands from development and focus on densification in our city cores.

Plant many trees since Ford cancelled all the tree planting. Teachers should be encouragjng the students to be part of the process.

Please, please, please keep or put in small pieces of green along the intensification corridor along King Street. Not everyone is able to make the travel (albeit to others a "small" walk) to designated parks away from the core.
Even just a bench, some grass, and a tree would go a long way to preserving the human aspect of our increasingly dehumanizing city.

Region doing a good job here

Yes. Protect and conserve these sensitive and fragile spaces. A mindset and practice of conserving what already exists and providing support for vulnerable spaces under threat is critical. Once a species or space disappears, it is difficult, maybe impossible to bring it back.

This would make Waterloo Region one of the most desirable places to live in this country for myself.

Green space, park and open space centered planning will go a long way to address preservation of these lands. Again biophilic city/regional planning would facilitate successful outcomes.

HOLD THE LINE!
Densify the core rather than sprawl into the townships.
Consider a ring of medium density around the core to encourage rebuilding from single-family homes to small condo/apt blocks, similar to around the universities.
HOLD THE LINE!

I feel strongly that the Region should continue to uphold the Countryside Line to encourage municipalities to look for ways to grow internally rather than sprawl. I am a little concerned to see that the Countryside Line isn't mentioned specifically in the list of strategic objectives

Healthy, Safe and Inclusive Communities

4.1 Improve child and youth wellbeing in Waterloo Region.

Participant responses

more affordable access to youth programs - include the parents into programming at the same time. many programs are far too late in the day for the kids to be functioning properly for school. there is so much high demand for high end sports... more things like basketball, tetherball, outdoor soccer, pick up games that are not registration based. families have to pay for times when they cannot attend and at the same time as parent councils or school functions or other social activities and it is very costly.

Tackle the poverty issue and you will help the children.

Increased full time outreach workers in community centres and schools would be helpful. Cheap or free programming would be good too.

4.2   Increase the amount of affordable housing in Waterloo Region.

Participant responses

property taxes are going through the roof for many families - the people who own properties are not able to avoid taxes through renting. there should be a residence tax (small) that could compensate for the home owners.

Cities/region should charge fees to developers that do not build affordable housing and use those fees to build affordable housing themselves.

Make sure the affordable housing is fully integrated in a community so everyone feels part of the solution.

This is desperately needed. We need much stronger minimum requirements on all developments, whether greenfield or infill

Let's avoid Waterloo Region to go through a gentrification process too far. If I were to get a new lease now in the uptown core, I would face a rent increase of approx. 70% compared to the lease I signed in 2015. This cannot be sustainable and will push out people with lower incomes, including students like myself. Let's focus on 2-3-4 story buildings, Triplexes, Quadruples on a wider scale in more places of the city, rather than 15 stories just in the downtown cores.

The inclusion of affordable housing into our social fabric in every corner of our city is of utmost importance

Getting a permit each year for rental properties is a big deterrent to new investments. This should somehow be limited to "student Housing". Like any other city, it should be land lords responsibility to provide reasonable living accomodation that complies with the city bylaws.

Densification of the downtown core with concessions from developers to provide a % of each project for affected demographics.

I am stunned at how much rent is and yet landlords are more abusive, less attentive, more biased (racist sexist homophobic) than ever before. They charge more for providing less. We need gate more affordable and coop housing.

4.3 Develop and implement upstream prevention approaches to improve health and wellbeing.

Participant responses

have the region represent the community. government employees do not represent the community. their wages are out of line with the rest of the community sector - guaranteed pay raises for office jobs is ridiculous. have the government employees hold their meetings in the community centers and not council chambers - you will have a more inclusive environment. people feel intimidated to come to those facilities

Continue funding Wellbeing Waterloo Region. Conduct more neighborhood-focused inclusion events.

Help families improve their physical well being through being active. Many poor families can not afford swimming, dance or sports. The costs are way too much for the average family so food and housing suffers to afford the activities.

Not sure what this means - if you want meaningful input from people you need to avoid jargon, give real life examples.

Yes more online and more outreach

4.4 Enhance community safety and crime prevention.

Participant responses

more community outreach is needed. the idea of pick up games and activities only supports community. there is not so much of divide of activities and participants if everyone can be included. affordable transportation - and accessible transportation will also help. more drop in areas for youth and families. have more supports for families like daycare, food preparation-nutrition support, job supports, housing opportunities, incorporate seniors and youth activities together to build community responsibility.

More citizen intervention and policing. Work with the police to develop programs to stop drugs, alcohol abuse and petty crimes. The crime in our region seems to have increased or maybe the reporting is more but I do not like the trends for young families.

I don't think crime is a serious problem in our community, though more social and health care resources need to be dedicated to address opioid crisis,

One death is too many especially if it could be saved. As university students population has grown, its important that the student / teachers walking tracks to be totally isolated & protected from traffic. We expose too many students & teachers to high risk of accidents that are totally preventable with better planning.

Online reporting for minor safety and crime issues.
Enhanced response to trivial crimes like rifling through cars -- no response and no consequences could

embolden thieves to start trying house doors or respond aggressively to resident confrontation. This seriously frightens us.

Plow sidewalks on regional roads.

Biggest thing is hiring full time people to do outreach. More inclusion and presence and invitation to youth and distressed neighbourhoods will prevent crime

Responsive and Engaging Public Service

5.1 Enhance opportunities for public engagement, input and involvement in Regional decision making.

Participant responses

Online tools like this survey are very useful

Beyond citizen engagement, what types of due diligence go into making large transformational business and technology decisions? Where does the region seek information/advice, how do you validate vendor claims? the cost of poor decision making can be enormous, how do you seek out new information and then validate it for bias?

5.2 Provide excellent citizen-centered services that enhance service quality / satisfaction and inspire trust and confidence in regional government services.

Participant responses

Cyber security, as the region shifts to the cloud and digital programs, payment and services how are you ensuring our data is safe? Are you engaging with any prominent research organizations to learn best practices, new approaches and validate your assumptions with unbiased research?

Grand River Transit is increasing the fares in September. No one can tell me how much the new fares will be. No one can even tell me who to contact. There needs to be greater accessibility to information. How does the Region expect people to plan their budget without this information? Please explain why the Region does not know what the bus fares will be in about 1 month's time.

5.3 Attract, support and retain skilled, engaged and diverse employees.

Participant responses

Use evidence based research to improve HR policies, particularly regarding flex-hours, working from home, and vacation days, all of which are vital for employee engagement. Improving these items in particular will attract the high-level talent that currently turns to private (tech) sector over public because of the better work/life balance offered there.

I read a Gartner report that said talent shortages are putting organizations at risk for security breaches. As you bring in new and emerging technologies, how do city staff gather information to make informed decisions, do you have the right skills in house to meet the changing needs of the business and rapid evolution of technology?

Cities/Region need to acknowledge the underground white-supremacy movement that exists here. Cities/Region need a strong wide-spread anti-racism campaign to combat this.

Publicize online hiring boards so qualified people can easily find matching positions.

5.4 Ensure long term financial sustainability and provide the most efficient, effective programs and services to the community.
Participant responses
Are you using benchmarks in IT? Are you having your contracts reviewed for value by any outside organizations? What governance models are being used to ensure timely, cost effective, and secure delivery of IT projects?