Waterloo Region Matters Survey 2019
Overview and highlights of the results

Research Acknowledgement
We are grateful to the Survey Research Centre at the University of Waterloo for the expert administration of the Waterloo Region Matters mixed-mode survey.

About the Survey
The Waterloo Region Matters Survey 2019 was conducted by the University of Waterloo Survey Research Centre. Local organizations and university departments partnered on this project to learn more about region-wide opinions and awareness of different topics such as regional services like transit, public health, immigration and planning as well as gather information about household demographics.

The survey included a set of questions (Appendix A) specifically designed to inform the development of the Region of Waterloo’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Survey demographics and the results from this set of strategic planning questions are highlighted in this report.

Key Survey Details:

Study population: Adult residents (18 years or older) within Waterloo Region, including Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and the four townships.

Methodology:
- Telephone survey data collection took place from January 25 to March 8, 2019
- Online survey data collection took place from January 22 to March 11, 2019.

Sample Size
500 surveys were completed, representative by region/municipality and age.
- 303 surveys completed over the telephone
- 197 surveys completed over the web
In which city or township do you live?

- **Kitchener**: 44%
- **Cambridge**: 25%
- **Waterloo**: 20%
- **Wellesley**: 2%
- **North Dumfries**: 2%
- **Woolwich**: 4%
- **Wilmot**: 3%
Which age group do you belong to?

- 65 or older: 21%
- 55 to 64: 16%
- 45 to 54: 18%
- 35 to 44: 19%
- 25 to 34: 15%
- 18 to 24: 11%
Please confirm your gender:
- Male: 47%
- Female: 52%
- Transgender: 1%

What was your sex at birth?
- Refused: 0%
- Male: 48%
- Female: 52%
Over the past few years, would you say that the quality of life in Waterloo Region has declined, stayed the same or improved?

- Declined: 17%
- Stayed the same: 45%
- Improved: 36%
- Don’t know: 2%

The Region of Waterloo government must balance the cost of delivering services with taxation. Which of the following would you most prefer for property taxes in Waterloo Region?

- Increase taxes to expand or improve services: 19%
- Maintain taxes and possibly reduce services: 13%
- Reduce taxes and cut services: 9%
- Increase taxes at around the rate of inflation to maintain services: 58%
- Don’t know: 1%
What, in your opinion, is the single most important local issue facing Waterloo Region today?

- Development/urban sprawl: 39%
- Public transit - not adequate: 10%
- Other: 33%
- LRT (light rail transit)/ION/rapid transit: 4%
- Infrastructure: 2%
- Traffic/road congestion: 4%
- Government spending/fiscal management: 1%
- Taxes: 1%
- Road maintenance: 1%
- Unemployment/poor job market: 2%
- Don't know: 3%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Spending More</th>
<th>Spending About the Same</th>
<th>Spending Less</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Facilities (e.g. museums)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage and Recycling</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROW International Airport</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbin Programs</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRT</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Supply and Wastewater</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Services</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Attraction and Retention</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Assistance Programs</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Plus</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Roads</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Housing</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for Seniors</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Services</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Homelessness</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with...]

I feel involved in decisions that impact me as a resident of Waterloo Region.

- Strongly agree: 4%
- Strongly disagree: 11%
- Agree: 25%
- Neither agree or disagree: 32%
- Disagree: 28%
[Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with...]

The Region of Waterloo government is in touch with the needs of my community.

- Strongly agree: 5%
- Strongly disagree: 9%
- Disagree: 27%
- Neither agree or disagree: 25%
- Agree: 34%
- Don’t know: 0%
The Region of Waterloo government does a good job keeping its residents informed.

Agree: 43%

Disagree: 24%

Neither agree or disagree: 23%

Strongly agree: 5%

Strongly disagree: 4%

Don’t know: 1%
[Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with...] All things considered, the Region of Waterloo government is doing a good job.
[Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with...] I can readily access any Region of Waterloo government services that I need.

- **Agree** 54%
- **Neither agree or disagree** 22%
- **Disagree** 15%
- **Strongly disagree** 3%
- **Strongly agree** 5%
- **Don’t know** 1%
[Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with...]

Considering the services I receive, I get good value for my Region of Waterloo tax dollars.

- **Agree**: 48%
- **Strongly agree**: 4%
- **Neither agree or disagree**: 23%
- **Disagree**: 19%
- **Strongly disagree**: 5%
- **Don’t know**: 1%
Survey Respondent Demographics

Current Employment Status

- Full-time: 48%
- Part-time: 12%
- Retired: 23%
- Student: 7%
- Homemaker: 6%
- Unemployed: 2%
- Other (Please specify): 2%
What is your current household income before taxes?

- Less than $20,000: 6%
- $20,000 to less than $50,000: 20%
- $50,000 to less than $80,000: 20%
- $80,000 to less than $100,000: 16%
- $100,000 or more: 36%
- Don’t know: 2%
What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- University degree: 41%
- College or trade apprenticeship: 33%
- High school: 22%
- Grade school: 2%
- Other (Please specify): 2%
Not including yourself, how many people live in your household? Please include all adults, other than yourself, and any children that live with you all or most of the time. # in household:
At present, are you married, living with a partner, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

- Married: 56%
- Never married: 20%
- Divorced or separated: 9%
- Widowed: 5%
- Living with partner/common-law: 10%

Do you have regular Internet access, whether at home, work or school or by some other means?

- Yes: 97%
- No: 3%
# Appendix A

**Waterloo Region Matters**  
**Demographics and Strategic Planning Survey Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Record No</td>
<td>Unique identifier (within sample type) for each record</td>
<td>Numerical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>A numerical value used to make data representative by age and region. Please see text below for explanation.</td>
<td>Numerical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A3            | Which age group do you belong to? | 01 18 to 24  
02 25 to 34  
03 35 to 44  
04 45 to 54  
05 55 to 64  
06 65 or older  
07 Under 18  
88 Don't know  
99 Refused |
| A4            | Depending on the response given to A3, either of the following text could have been used: (If the respondent answered 88 'Don't know' or 99 'refused'): **To qualify to complete this survey, we must confirm that you are 18 years of age or older. Are you 18 or older?** (If the respondent answered anything other): **Have you turned 18?** | 01 Yes  
02 No  
88 Don't know  
99 Refused |
| AGE_GROUP     | Calculated variable: Determines which age group the respondent belongs to based on their answers to the two prior questions. | 01 18 to 24  
02 25 to 34  
03 35 to 44  
04 45 to 54  
05 55 to 64  
06 65 or older  
07 Under 18  
88 Don't know  
99 Refused |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A5            | Please confirm your gender | 01 Male  
02 Female  
03 Transgender  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| A5_B          | What was your sex at birth? | 01 Male  
02 Female  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |

**SECTION S: ROW Strategic Planning and Strategic Initiatives**

| S1            | What, in your opinion, is the single most important local issue facing Waterloo Region today? | 01 Development/urban sprawl  
02 Government spending/fiscal management  
03 Infrastructure  
04 LRT (light rail transit)/ION/rapid transit  
05 Public transit – not adequate  
06 Road maintenance  
07 Taxes  
08 Traffic/road congestion  
09 Unemployment/poor job market  
10 Other  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1O</td>
<td>What, in your opinion, is the single most important local issue facing Waterloo Region today? Text response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| S2            | Over the past few years, would you say that the quality of life in Waterloo Region has declined, stayed the same or improved? | 01 Declined  
02 Stayed the same  
03 Improved  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>The Region of Waterloo government must balance the cost of delivering services with taxation. Which of the following would you <strong>most</strong> prefer for property taxes in Waterloo Region?</td>
<td>01 Increase taxes to expand or improve services  02 Increase taxes at around the rate of inflation to maintain services  03 Maintain taxes and possibly reduce services  04 Reduce taxes and cut services  88 Don’t know  99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_A</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Grand River Transit bus service</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less  02 Spending about the same  03 Spending more  88 Don’t know  99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_B</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Ambulance and paramedic services</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less  02 Spending about the same  03 Spending more  88 Don’t know  99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_C</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Curb side garbage and recycling collection</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less  02 Spending about the same  03 Spending more  88 Don’t know  99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Answer Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>S4_D</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Regional roads</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less 02 Spending about the same 03 Spending more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_E</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Public health services</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less 02 Spending about the same 03 Spending more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_F</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Social housing</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less 02 Spending about the same 03 Spending more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_G</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Child care</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less 02 Spending about the same 03 Spending more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4_H</td>
<td>Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? <strong>Greenbin programs</strong></td>
<td>01 Spending less 02 Spending about the same 03 Spending more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Answer Codes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| S4_I          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services?  
**Services for seniors**                                                                                                           | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused                                                                                                           |
| S4_J          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services?  
**Employment assistance services**                                                                                           | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused                                                                                                           |
| S4_K          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services?  
**Region of Waterloo International Airport**                                                                                  | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused                                                                                                           |
| S4_L          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services?  
**Cultural facilities, such as museums**                                                                                   | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused                                                                                                           |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| S4_M          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? **Mobility Plus accessible transit** | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| S4_N          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? **Addressing homelessness** | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| S4_O          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? **Water supply and waste water** | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| S4_P          | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? **Business attraction and retention** | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **S4_Q**      | Keeping in mind that taxes may increase if spending increases, do you think that your Region of Waterloo government should be spending less, about the same as now, or more on each of the following services? Police services | 01 Spending less  
02 Spending about the same  
03 Spending more  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| **S5_A**      | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: I feel involved in decisions that impact me as a resident of Waterloo Region. | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| **S5_B**      | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: The Region of Waterloo government is in touch with the needs of my community. | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| **S5_C**      | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: The Region of Waterloo government does a good job keeping its residents informed. | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| S5_D          | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following:  
*All things considered, the Region of Waterloo government is doing a good job.* | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| S5_E          | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following:  
*I can readily access any Region of Waterloo government services that I need.* | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
| S5_F          | I would like to read you several statements that touch on your general impressions of Region of Waterloo government. How much do you agree or disagree with the following:  
*Considering the services I receive, I get good value for my Region of Waterloo tax dollars.* | 01 Strongly disagree  
02 Disagree  
03 Neither agree or disagree  
04 Agree  
05 Strongly agree  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |

**SECTION H**

| H1            | This section asks about you and your household. The answers to these questions are used only for broad analysis purposes, and the information that you provide is completely confidential. What is your current employment status? | 01 Full-time  
02 Part-time  
03 Retired  
04 Unemployed  
05 Student  
06 Homemaker  
07 Other (Please specify)  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1_O</td>
<td>This section asks about you and your household. The answers to these questions are used only for broad analysis purposes, and the information that you provide is completely confidential. What is your current employment status? <strong>Other (Please specify)</strong></td>
<td>Text response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>What is your current household income before taxes?</td>
<td>01 Less than $20,000 02 $20,000 to less than $50,000 03 $50,000 to less than $80,000 04 $80,000 to less than $100,000 05 $10,000 or more 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?</td>
<td>01 Grade school 02 High school 03 College or trade apprenticeship 04 University degree 05 Other (Please specify): 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3_O</td>
<td>What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? <strong>Other (Please specify):</strong></td>
<td>Text response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Not including yourself, how many people live in your household? Please include all adults, other than yourself, and any children that live with you all or most of the time.</td>
<td>Numerical response 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>At present, are you married, living with a partner, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?</td>
<td>01 Married 02 Living with partner / common-law 03 Widowed 04 Divorced or separated 05 Never married 88 Don’t know 99 Refused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Answer Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| H6            | Do you have regular Internet access, whether at home, work or school or by some other means? | 01 Yes  
02 No  
88 Don’t know  
99 Refused |