Public Health changes: A letter from Chair Karen Redman

The provincial government announced wide-sweeping changes to Public Health last April. In addition to cutting back on provincial funding, they announced their plan to combine the current 35 health units—including Region of Waterloo Public Health—into 10 larger groupings. Waterloo Region would be combined with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, Peel and Halton Regions to cover a combined population of almost three million people. Population-wise, this would be the largest grouping of the 10.

Cuts to funding for Public Health could put the programs that keep residents safe and healthy in jeopardy. From restaurant inspections and water testing to immunizations and breastfeeding support, Public Health programs are an extremely important part of our community wellbeing. Being part of the largest public health grouping in Ontario may also make it harder to focus on health issues locally and benefit from partnerships with local schools, municipalities and community partners.

Like many others, I am concerned about the future of Public Health services in Waterloo Region. The Region has shared a number of concerns with the province. We feel strongly that meeting the public health needs of Regional residents should remain a top priority.

The province has said that it has plans to appoint an expert advisor to lead consultation related to Public Health changes. This is hopeful, although I remain concerned about the impact of funding cuts and changes the province has set in motion.

The Region has a long history of collaboration and we will continue to serve and advocate for our residents in the best ways we can.

Karen Redman, Regional Chair

2020 Region of Waterloo budget

2020 will be a challenging budget year. Regional staff are working on options to achieve Council’s tax rate guideline of about 2.5 per cent for Regional programs (excluding police). Some items putting pressure on the 2020 budget include:

- Reduced provincial funding in a number of areas including Public Health, Employment and Income Support, and Children’s Services.
- Funding development charge exemptions for certain types of development (this must be paid for by property taxes and user rates.)
- Funding required for the upkeep of the Region’s roads and bridges, the landfill site and transfer stations, affordable housing units, Sunnyside Home, Regionally-owned child care centres, transit buses, etc.
- Service improvements needed to meet demand in a growing community.

Check www.engagewr.ca in November to tell us your ideas about the upcoming budget. The Regional budget will be approved in January 2020.
Your community is taking action on climate change and you can help!

Climate change due to human activities is a global problem. Communities around the world, including Waterloo Region, are taking action on climate change.

**Preventing climate change**

What’s the most effective way to curb climate change? Reducing the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) we produce. Local municipalities recently set a target to reduce our community’s greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent by the year 2050. Through ClimateActionWR, our community is creating a long-term strategy to do this and we need YOU to share your voice! Visit [www.climateactionwr.ca](http://www.climateactionwr.ca) for upcoming opportunities to get involved and share your thoughts.

Flooding at the West Montrose Covered Bridge in 2017.

**Preparing for climate change**

Global climate change is already increasing our local temperatures and bringing more rain, ice and extreme weather. These changes affect our health, public services, homes, businesses and environment. The Region has developed a Community Climate Adaptation (CCA) plan with organizations and individuals across Waterloo Region. The plan explains how we can work together and take action to reduce our risk here in Waterloo Region. To read the draft CCA plan, visit [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/climate-change](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/climate-change).

**Community Environmental Fund**

Are you working to make Waterloo Region a greener community? The Region’s Community Environmental Fund supports community-based projects that promote environmental sustainability and enhance our natural environment. We will be taking applications this fall.

For more information, please visit [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/CEF](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/CEF).
Beyond the shelf at Region of Waterloo Library

When you think “library”, you probably think “books”. But now more than ever, Region of Waterloo Library (RWL) is providing a wide range of off-the-shelf offerings.

As the needs of our communities change, our libraries are evolving to keep up. RWL offers free access to a wealth of information and entertainment. Here’s a sampling:

- Borrow family passes to the Region of Waterloo Museums or THE MUSEUM
- Mobile hotspot lending
- Puzzle exchange
- Seed Library, featuring a selection of floral, fruit and vegetable seeds for sowing
- One-on-one tech advice
- Storytime

Membership perks are easy to harness. Sign up for your library card at www.rwlibrary.ca/librarymembership.

The Region’s libraries serve our rural communities and beyond with 10 branches across North Dumfries, Wilmot, Wellesley, and Woolwich townships. For more information on all the great things happening at RWL, visit your local branch or visit www.rwlibrary.ca.

The right information, the right way

We heard you! Over the summer, almost 500 residents provided input on how they would like to receive municipal information.

The Region of Waterloo, along with cities and townships, provide a wide range of programs and services to almost 600,000 citizens. From public transit and waste collection, to recreation programs and by-law enforcement, we affect the lives of citizens every day.

Here are some highlights of what you told us:

- The vast majority of respondents search for municipal information on our websites and social media accounts.
- The information respondents are most interested in include: breaking news, garbage/recycling details, road closures and cultural events.
- For urgent service questions, most respondents want to talk to customer service (24/7) or use live online chat.

Over the coming months, we will use this information to make decisions on how to better communicate with citizens. For more information and detailed survey results, visit www.EngageWR.ca/information.

Is your career here?

Have you ever considered joining our team? The Region employs more than 3,500 people in a wide variety of fields: community and social services, health care, arts, culture and recreation, natural and applied sciences, skilled trades, administrative support and much more.

The Region offers competitive wages, pensions and benefits, but there is so much more that makes us an outstanding employer, including:

- Employee fitness centres
- Tuition assistance program
- Alternative work arrangements
- Time for family medical leave
- Employee events and casual days
- In-house learning and leadership development
- Secondment opportunities

The Region’s employees feel valued for the difference they make in our community every day. If you are passionate about making a difference, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/jobs.
LET’S ALL PLEDGE
TO DO THE EXTRA SEC CHECK

Do you do the Extra Sec Check? It only takes a split second to change everything – for the better. By slowing down and paying more attention as we navigate around roads, pathways and trails, we give everyone a better opportunity for a safe journey.

The SafeRoads education campaign aims to build awareness around the four most common collision patterns locally: rear end collisions at signalized intersections, pedestrian and cyclist collisions in signalized intersections and roundabout collisions.

The campaign messaging, shaped largely by public input, shows a strong belief that safe roads can only be achieved when everyone works together. This includes government, police, motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Have you done your Extra Sec Check today? Find out more at www.SafeRoadsWR.com.

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Pilot project will include 5 km of separated bike lanes

The Region is building 5 km of separated bike lanes as part of a pilot project to encourage more people to cycle.

The 5 km network in Waterloo includes lanes along University Avenue, Columbia Street, King Street, Albert Street and Erb Street with connecting links along the Laurel Trail through Waterloo Park.

Separated bike lanes are next to roadways but physically separated from traffic. In the pilot, separated cycling lanes will be made separate using bollards mounted on the pavement, precast concrete with mounted bollards and planter boxes. This physical separation will help increase the comfort and safety of cyclists.

Construction began in late August and the network will be studied for about 18 months.

The Region will continuously monitor the separated bike lanes and get feedback from residents through public engagement. We want to know:

- The number of people cycling along the corridors
- The safety of all road users in the pilot project area
- Vehicle traffic levels and travel times in the pilot project area

Regional staff will report back to Regional Council after the study has ended in the winter of 2020. Find out more and provide feedback by visiting: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/bikelanepilot.

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Cambridge and Waterloo streetscape projects taking shape

Cambridge

In April, the Region began a $15M reconstruction of King Street in Cambridge (from Dover to Bishop Street). Once complete, King Street will be completely renewed. Streetscaping will include buffered on-road bike lanes, planters, benches and lighting. Road asphalt, sidewalks and underground infrastructure will be replaced and decorative backlit signs will be constructed at the limits of the business area.

When our crews removed the asphalt on King Street, the wooden ties from an old street railway line (circa 1894 to 1939) were still there and in good condition. They were documented by an archaeologist and removed to allow replacement of the sewers and watermain.

This project will be completed in stages over three construction seasons. Find details and pictures online: www.engagewr.ca/cambridge-king-street-reconstruction.

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Waterloo

Phase two of the UpTown Waterloo reconstruction project (Elgin Street to Bridgeport Road) is now complete. This project included bollard-separated bike lanes, decorative paving stones, new trees and lighting installations through the Uptown core.

This project was coordinated with the Region’s separated bike lane pilot project to provide new cycling lanes and connections on King Street between the Waterloo Spur/Public Square and Columbia Street. This project has created a safe, comfortable environment to bring more people to the area by foot, bike, car and ION.

Find details about the separated bike lane pilot project at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/bikelanepilot.
Top 10 reasons to take a seat with GRT

Grand River Transit (GRT) has changed significantly in the past year. More frequent departure times, new ION train service and new routes, such as the 206 iXpress, are just a few of the reasons to take a seat this fall.

More reasons to ride:

1. The views! ION Route 301, with its large panoramic windows, offers picturesque views of the region and nature’s ever-changing palette. Enjoy the sights as it glides past Rockway Golf Course, through Waterloo Park or past the hustle and bustle of the shops in Uptown Waterloo and along King Street.

2. More destinations. Connect to ION bus Route 302 at Fairway Station and take a trip to downtown Galt with its wide river, iconic bridges and European-like charm. Travel from Greengate Village on the new Route 50 with direct access to Cambridge Centre Mall or Cambridge Memorial Hospital, or try Route 72 Flex Boxwood to Loblaws and Toyota.

3. Reduce your carbon footprint. Transit is healthy for you and the environment. Walking to stops or using your bike for part of your trip is a great way to stay active.

4. All vehicles and station platforms are fully accessible with space for up to two wheelchairs on buses and four on each ION train.

5. We have more than 2,800 stops – there is bound to be one close to you!

6. Meet new people and feel more connected to your community.

7. Relax, listen to music or catch up on a good book. Having someone else worry about driving means more time for you!

8. You don’t have to worry about finding parking or paying for it.

9. Never taken the bus or train? No problem, GRT offers free travel training to help you navigate the system.

10. Save money! It’s cheaper than your daily latte.

As the seasons change, GRT has more improvements planned including a new station at the Sunrise Centre and completion of the station at the University of Waterloo to better serve students, faculty and staff. We hope to see you on board soon.

Warning:
Never turn in front of trains, doing so could result in injury or death.
Trains have the right-of-way. Check your blind spot before making a turn.
Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services is happy to announce the launch of the M.E.D.I.C. personal emergency information program.

M.E.D.I.C. stands for Medical Emergency Data Information Card and allows emergency responders to obtain vital medical history to assist in your care in the event you or a loved one is not able to communicate in an emergency. Once complete, the form should be kept with your medications in an accessible location such as a kitchen table, counter or bedroom dresser so it can be easily accessed by paramedics.

The card is available online at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/PSV and can be printed and completed at home. If you require assistance in obtaining a form, please contact 519-575-4400.

Vision screening program ensures healthy child development

Eighty per cent of early learning comes from what a child sees. It is estimated that 1 in 4 children have a vision problem. Since vision and learning are strongly linked, poor vision may impact school performance and healthy development.

Starting in September 2019, Senior Kindergarten children in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and the Waterloo Region District School Board will be screened by trained Lions Club volunteers. The vision screening includes three short tests to help identify any early vision problems.

It is recommended that children see an Optometrist for their first eye exam starting at six months old. These exams are covered by OHIP for children 19 years or younger with a valid health card. For more information, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/visualhealth.

Waterloo Region is growing

By the year 2041, Waterloo Region is expected to be home to 835,000 people and 404,000 jobs. To plan for this growth, we’re updating the Regional Official Plan (ROP). The ROP will help guide growth and change for the next 20 years.

Throughout the fall, we’re seeking input from the community to help us update our plan. Community consultation provides an opportunity for residents and businesses to tell us about the kind of place they want Waterloo Region to be in the future. Community members are invited to share opinions on how and where the region’s growth should occur.

There are several ways you can provide feedback. If you would like to get involved, or would like details about upcoming ROP reports and events, please contact regionalofficialplanreview@regionofwaterloo.ca or visit www.engagewr.ca.
Then and now: the evolution of care for older adults

Sunnyside Home is sharing its deep-rooted history as it celebrates 150 years in Kitchener. We believe we are aging well; our story shows that care for older adults has come a long way since its roots in the House of Industry and Refuge.

"In the 1860s, residents at the House of Industry and Refuge were referred to as inmates with strict rules," said Connie Lacy, Director of Seniors’ Services at the Region of Waterloo. "Today, people who live at our long term care home are treated like valued members of a caring community. We create new opportunities for them to live their best life every day."

Sunnyside’s story began in 1869 as a home for the county’s most vulnerable. The original property on Frederick Street included a house and farm. Years later it became an “Old People’s Home” (that’s what it was called in the 1920s!). Today, it is a vibrant community on Franklin Street that feels like home, with hundreds of visitors every day.

Visit us online to journey back in time: www.engagewr.ca/sunnyside-150th-anniversary. Explore old photographs and stories that give you a feel for what life was like, and watch our new video, “Welcome Home” for a glimpse into life at Sunnyside today.

Thank you!

Thank you to the participants and sponsors who helped raise more than $16,700 for this year’s Sunnyside Foundation Golf Tournament. All proceeds go towards enhancing programs and services that help older adults live their best life.

Special thanks to the following sponsors:

Platinum sponsors:
- ProResp
- Frank Cowan Company

Gold sponsors:
- Ian Inglis, Remax Solid Gold

Silver sponsors:
- Achieva Health
- Cardinal Health
- Handicare
- Lackner McLennan Insurance
- Remedy’s RX Specialty Pharmacy

New app frees up time for resident care at Sunnyside Home

A new mobile app could save nurses and personal support workers at Sunnyside Home up to 1.5 hours a day; time they can redirect into care for residents.

The app enables care staff at the Region’s long term care home to complete medical charting and forms on mobile devices.

“Paperwork requires a significant amount of time,” said personal support worker Brandon Restoule. “Now we can do it more accurately and efficiently…freeing up time that residents can benefit from, such as a few extra minutes to have a conversation.”

“Like all health care organizations, we are trying to do our work in more efficient ways,” said Julie Wheeler, Administrator at Sunnyside. “This app helps give staff more time to engage with residents to help them live their best life.”
Join our membership program today!

- Single annual membership only $35 (all rates plus HST)
- Family annual membership only $60 (covers two adults and their dependant children)

**Benefits**
- Free unlimited admission to the museums operated by the Region of Waterloo (Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum, Doon Heritage Village, Schneider Haus National Historic Site and McDougall Cottage Historic Site)
- 10 per cent gift shop discount at Schneider Haus National Historic Site and Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum
- Discounts on selected workshops, special programs and lectures
- One complimentary guest pass for you to share with a friend

**Reciprocal museum benefits**
- Free admission to many other museums. See website for details.

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**We bring history to life!**
Our collections include heritage buildings, artifacts and archival materials that represent through time, the history and culture of Waterloo Region.

**We exhibit and interpret**
The museum and historic sites offer a series of interesting and educational programs, exhibits and special events.

**We keep you informed**
Receive a monthly eNewsletter and also receive advance notices and invitations to special events and exhibit openings.

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Deaf and hard of hearing (TTY): 519-575-4608  www.regionofwaterloo.ca/museums