

# Council Strategic Plan **2015-2018**

City of Waterloo

**Final Report**

June 12, 2015



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# Greetings from Council



One of the building blocks of making a great city is good strategic planning. This is where, as a community, we pause and take a good look at where we are and where we want to be. Our past successes have been guided by clear, focused strategic plans for the future based on the guiding principles of service excellence, leadership, effective communications, healthy workplace, and fiscal responsibility that aim to enhance the quality of life for our citizens.

Our residents want to be informed, connected and engaged in everything the city does. Maintaining channels of respectful communication is critical. That's why over 1,200 stakeholders representing residents, business, community and education leaders, city council, post-secondary students and city staff were asked for their vision of Waterloo through on-line and telephone surveys as well as face-to-face interviews and focus groups. From this consultation, six key priorities for the City over this term of council emerged:

- Multi-modal transportation
- Infrastructure renewal
- Strong community
- Environmental leadership
- Corporate excellence
- Economic development

We are confident the strategic plan for 2015 to 2018 will serve our community and look forward to working with staff and our residents to make Waterloo a great place to live, work, learn and play.



# 1 Introduction

The city of Waterloo has much to be proud of. It is a small sized city with a population of 130,000 people,<sup>1</sup> and is located in Waterloo Region (the 4<sup>th</sup> largest urban centre in Ontario, and 10<sup>th</sup> in Canada). Over the last twenty years the city has grown in population by 39% based on the 2011 Census – outpacing the population growth of the region (34%) and province (27%).<sup>2</sup>

The city is home to respected college and university post-secondary institutions that are important drivers of talent development, technological and social innovation, commercialization and entrepreneurial success. These institutions are leading economic trends and changing how business, government, and institutional spheres shape success. Examples are evident in the University of Waterloo’s ground breaking intellectual property policies that ultimately led to the creation of iconic technology leaders such as Blackberry, Open-Text Corporation, and Maplesoft, to name a few.<sup>3</sup>

Building from its robust Mennonite agrarian roots, history of liquor production, manufacturing and insurance sectors, the city of Waterloo is known for its part in Canada’s Technology Triangle, and is home to many internationally recognized think tanks and research institutes, including the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, the Institute for Quantum Computing, and the Centre for International Governance Innovation.

In 2007, the city was named the global Intelligent Community of the Year by the International Community Forum<sup>4</sup>, and was one of only 14 cities across Canada to be awarded the status of Age-Friendly City by the World Health Organization in 2012.<sup>5</sup>

The progressive nature of a vibrant business incubation ecosystem has built up around organizations such as the University of Waterloo VeloCity, Wilfrid Laurier University LaunchPad, and the Accelerator Centre and their partnership with longstanding

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<sup>1</sup> Region of Waterloo, “Planning Information Bulletin – 2013 Year-End Population and Household Estimates for the Region of Waterloo.” April 2014

<sup>2</sup>City of Waterloo – Labour Market Profile, [This link takes you to labour market information](#) ; Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey and 2006 Community Profiles Census

<sup>3</sup> Golombeck, Mark. “The Ideas City: City of Waterloo.” City of Waterloo Business in Focus (2014-04)

<sup>4</sup> Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), “Community Profiles”, Official Website: [this link take you to the intelligent community forum website](#) ; Accessed on 2015-04-01

<sup>5</sup> City of Waterloo, “Age-friendly City”, Official Website: [this link takes you to the City of Waterloo website for the Age Friendly Cities document](#) ; Accessed on 2015-01-20



neighbouring business enablers such as Communitech.<sup>6</sup> The area is a hotbed for attracting thinkers and innovators, developing new talent, and fostering new business start-ups (recently rivaling even Stanford University).<sup>7</sup>

The city is recognized by its residents for its quality of life with Waterloo Park at the heart of the city, its active transportation network, the ongoing revitalization of the Uptown core, high quality recreation facilities, and the renowned festivals that foster a sense of place. However, the city is not standing still; rather it is forging its path forward within an environment influenced by economic change, challenges related to growth, and competitive regional and global pressures. The city of Waterloo is leading the way and claiming its place as a growing, sustainable, and vibrant community that welcomes the world to come live, work, play and learn.

## 2 Informing the Strategy

The Council Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2018 articulates an actionable plan, grounded in evidence, informed through an inclusive consultation process, and reflective of defined responsibility and accountability. It reinforces the City's vision, mission, and the guiding principles that represent the core values with which staff and Council will conduct its affairs and govern the municipality.

The summary results and key findings of each phase of the methodology used to develop this strategic plan are highlighted in this report. These follow a logical pattern, as they build into a cumulative body of locally sourced, and community based knowledge that ultimately feeds into the establishment of the City of Waterloo's Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles, as well as playing a critical role in informing the Strategic Priorities and Objectives.

The success, or failure, of any community is largely predicated on the people who reside, work, learn, and drive the community forward through day-to-day activities. Because community stakeholders play such a vital role in the city's future, this strategy is centred on a strong foundation of public engagement. It also incorporates political, staff, and municipal leadership engagement, with checks and balances along the way, to confirm that the strategic plan is grounded in the desires and aspirations of the community, and equally in the operational and functional feasibility of the municipality.

In sum, the methodological process has been structured to ensure that the hard questions are asked, and that the findings uncovered are effectively translated into

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<sup>6</sup> Golombeck, Mark. "The Ideas City: City of Waterloo." City of Waterloo Business in Focus (2014-04)

<sup>7</sup> Exchange Magazine. "There's no stopping the Waterloo Region startup train." Exchange Morning Post: [this link takes you to the Exchange Magazine website](#) ; Accessed on 2015-04-01



objectives that will work to bolster the city's potential and address the real challenges that exist.

The Strategic Plan is separated into two key documents. This document captures the core elements of the Strategic Plan itself, while the Technical Reference Document offers context, research findings, more detailed consultation summaries, and a snapshot of the community profile.

There are a number of new and enhanced initiatives contained in this strategic plan. It is important to recognize that not all initiatives can be implemented at the same time – financial and human resource allocations are key considerations. Ultimately, the City's corporate budgetary process will determine project funding availability, which in turn informs the level of prioritization that these initiatives will receive.

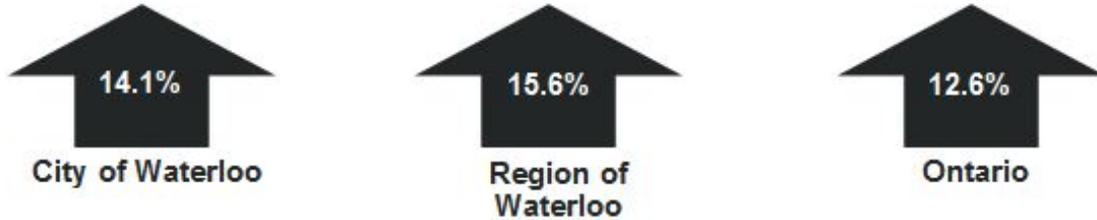
This Council strategic plan documents specific priority initiatives that have been validated through the planning process. In addition to advancing these initiatives, the City continues to deliver its mandated and core services through exceptional service delivery standards that the residents and rate payers have come to expect.

City staff and leadership continue to focus on achieving a careful balance to maintain the day-to-day core service delivery, and pursue initiatives that will maintain and secure positive future direction and growth for the city of Waterloo.



### 3 City of Waterloo Snapshot

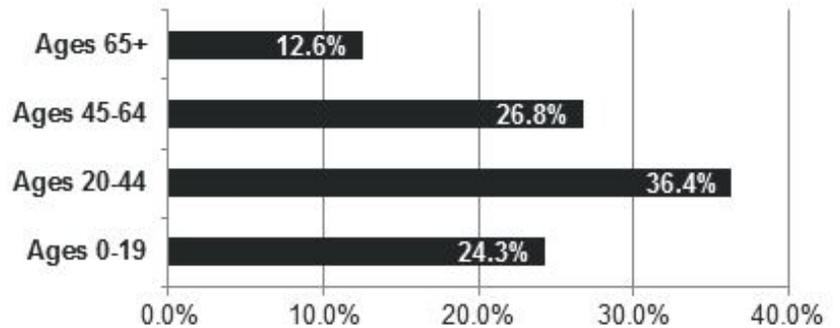
#### Population Growth 2001-2011



#### Age Profile



The median age in 2011 was 37.6 years old



#### Average Household Total Income 2011

**\$100,414**

City of Waterloo

**\$85,546**

Region of Waterloo

**\$85,772**

Ontario

#### Dwelling Value Change 2006 vs. 2011



**+23.7%**

City of Waterloo

**+21.4%**

Region of Waterloo

**+23.5%**

Ontario



## Commuting Patterns 2011



City of Waterloo residents commuted to work in City of Waterloo



City of Waterloo residents commuted to work in City of Kitchener



City of Waterloo residents commuted to work in Region of Waterloo

## College and University Education 2011

**62.3%**

City of Waterloo

**52.1%**

Region of Waterloo

**54.6%**

Ontario

## Apprenticeship and Trades Education

**5.3%**

City of Waterloo

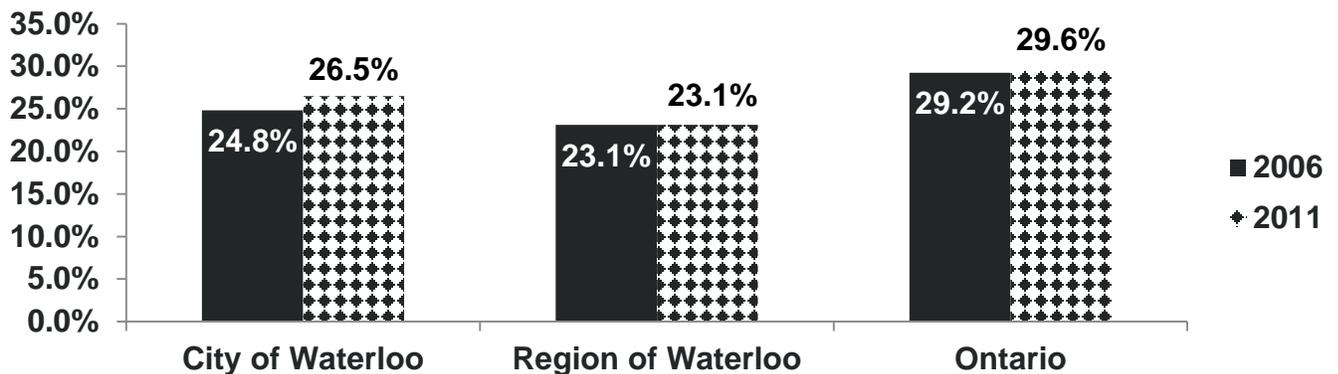
**7.6%**

Region of Waterloo

**7.4%**

Ontario

## % Immigrant Composition 2006 vs. 2011

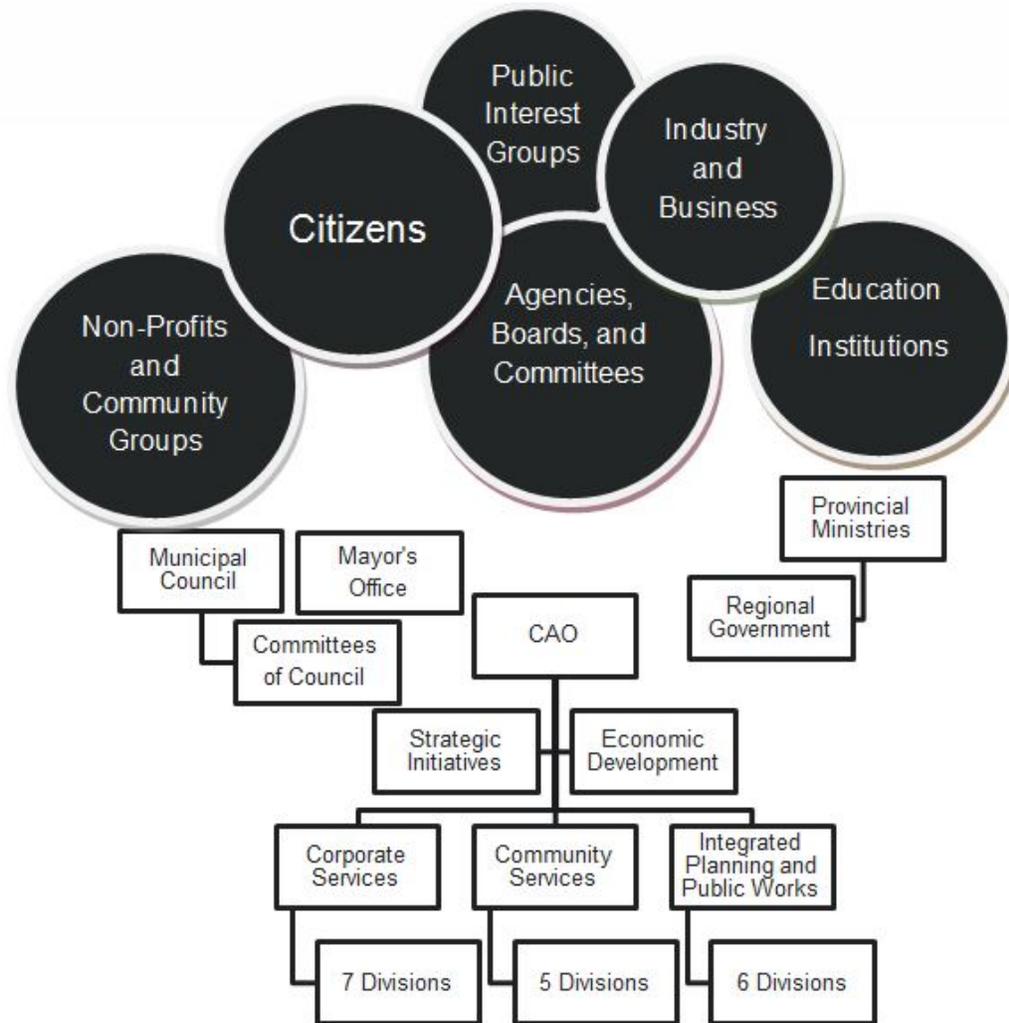




## 4 Background Review

The modern local policy and governance environment is replete with socio-economic and cultural entities that continuously influence strategic priorities. They act as critical stakeholders and valuable collaborators in community building, whose voice must be effectively incorporated in an inclusive manner. Figure 1 highlights the multitude of community spheres of influence upon the municipal structure for the City of Waterloo.

Figure 1: Waterloo’s Municipal Structure in a Modern Context



The following sections in the Background Review explore the existing strategic plans and initiatives of the City itself, as well as those of groups and organizations that directly influence public policy considerations.

The current policy framework for the City of Waterloo is examined through a detailed Overview of Relevant Strategies and Plans. These documents are examined and key



implications from a strategic perspective are documented (see Technical Reference Document).

Using a Common Threads analysis technique, the common themes that emerge from the policies are analyzed in a matrix and compared against each other to reveal similarities. These thematic similarities, or common threads, are recognized as areas of significance, and warrant consideration in conjunction with key priorities that emerge through the strategic planning process.

Combined with the findings that emerged from the community consultation process, key findings within the policy review are incorporated into the SWOT Analysis and Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages sections of this report. These informed Council in the shaping of strategic priorities and objectives presented in this Strategic Plan.

## 4.1 Current Policy Framework

The diagram in Figure 2 below identifies policy areas that exist within the City of Waterloo's policy framework. Understanding and reflecting common points of intersection between the various policies is an important exercise to the strategic planning process.

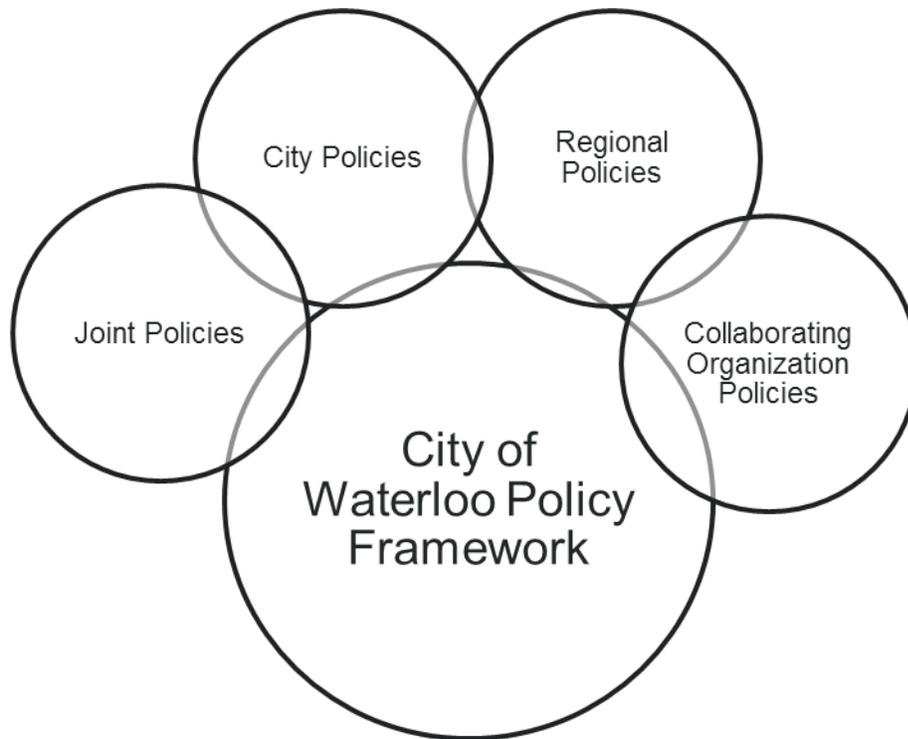
For example, the Region of Waterloo Official Plan must be considered when establishing key policy objectives in the City of Waterloo Official Plan. There is a direct and regulatory relationship in a two-tier municipal environment.

In a less formal manner, the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy will have significant strategic and tactical overlap as various goals and objectives will require collaboration and cooperation to be effectively planned and implemented.

However, in a more nuanced manner, policies such as those of post-secondary institutions are examined as the institutional goals and objectives have direct bearing on the future direction and prosperity of the local post-secondary education sector.



Figure 2: Policy Framework Diagram



As a driver of growth and change in the city, strong strategic alignment with City plans is important as it helps ensure effective future infrastructure and long-term goals are addressed in a sustainable manner that respects community building.

Various external policies, such as the Sustainable Waterloo Region Strategic Plan can have real implications on City operations, especially when goals or initiatives are formally endorsed (e.g., Regional Carbon Initiative). For example, environmental benchmarks in policies from other organizations that have been adopted by City Council may affect how City projects and programs are developed and implemented.

Finally, City policies themselves necessarily overlap and require a means to effectively coordinate the various goals and objectives. There are direct and immediate operational efficiencies, improved planning, and more effective delivery of core services, as well as longer-term planning improvements that are achieved when these policies are developed and managed at an overarching level.

The Strategic Plan itself lays the foundation and direction, as well as the overarching vision and mission that drive the organization and the community forward. It is critical that policies are not developed in isolation, but with strong internal collaboration and sustainability in mind.



### 4.1.1 Overview of Relevant Strategies and Plans

The following documents, or sets of documents, have been reviewed as part of the common threads analysis. They constitute a variety of municipal plans, strategies, and reports from City of Waterloo stakeholders and different levels of government. In total, 38 documents were reviewed.

Twenty-three (23) documents were from the City of Waterloo; six (6) were from the Region of Waterloo; eight (8) were from select stakeholder organizations; and one (1) was a joint report issued by the Cities of Waterloo and Kitchener.

The documents reviewed are as follow:

#### City of Waterloo

- My Future. My Say. My Waterloo: 2011 – 2014 City of Waterloo Strategic Plan (2011)
- Who We Are: City of Waterloo Business Plans 2015 (2015)
- Mayor's Advisory Committee for Age-Friendly Waterloo: Report to the Mayor (2014)
- Official Plan, City of Waterloo (Office Consolidation) October 2014 (2014)
- Waterloo Organizational Review Final Report May 6, 2013 Public Report v2 (2013)
- Integrated Heritage Strategy (in development) includes the Museum and Collections Strategy and the Built Heritage Strategy
- The Corporation of the City of Waterloo Annual Financial Statement Staff Report (2014)
- City of Waterloo Municipal Performance Measurement Program Review (2013)
- City of Waterloo Asset Management Plan (2014)
- Waterloo's Culture Plan: A Catalyst for Culture 2014-2024 (2014)
- City of Waterloo Transportation Master Plan, For a City that is "truly accessible to all" (2011)
- Waterloo Park Master Plan (2009)
- The Corporation of the City of Waterloo Community, Culture and Recreation Services Master Plan (2008)
- City of Waterloo Fire Safety Master Plan (2007)
- City of Waterloo Action Sport Strategy (2013)
- Outdoor Sport Field Strategy: A plan for multipurpose rectangular fields, diamonds, and cricket pitches in the City of Waterloo, 2012-2031 (2012)
- City-Wide Brownfields Community Improvement Plan (2013)
- City of Waterloo By-law enforcement Strategy Update (2012)
- Cemetery Services – Bechtel Park Master Plan (2009)
- The Environmental Strategy (2014)
- Older Adult Recreation Strategy (draft from 2014)
- City of Waterloo Uptown Parking Strategy (2008)
- Development Charges Background Study City of Waterloo (Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2012)



### **Region of Waterloo**

- Regional Official Plan, Region of Waterloo (2010)
- Region of Waterloo 2011-2014 Strategic Plan (2011)
- Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy (2014)
- The Region of Waterloo Central Transit Corridor Community Building Strategy (2013)
- Region of Waterloo Re-urbanization Community Improvement Plan
- Region of Waterloo Regional Transportation Master Plan: Moving Forward 2031 (2011)

### **City of Waterloo and Kitchener**

- 2013 – 2017 Accessibility Plan: The Accessibility Plan for the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo

### **Stakeholder Organizations**

- IBM Smarter Cities Challenge Report: Waterloo, Canada (2013)
- ION Project Consulting Report: Strategic Planning for Construction and Operating Phases (UpTown Waterloo BIA & Laurier MBA)
- Wilfrid Laurier University Campus Master Plan (2010)
- Conestoga College Strategic Plan (2014-2017)
- University of Waterloo Strategic Plan (2013)
- Sustainable Waterloo Region Strategic Plan (2013)
- Uptown Waterloo BIA Strategic Plan 2012-2017
- Grand River Conservation Authority, Grand River Watershed Management Plan (2014)

## **4.1.2 Common Threads Analysis**

All of the documents and policies above have been analysed comparatively to uncover areas of thematic overlap. All of the policies were then catalogued in correlation with the common themes in order to observe patterns – in essence, to find the ‘common threads’ among them.

The following observations are important, as they highlight themes that are strongly represented in the current policy framework internally, and where external policies are aligned with these areas of importance. Further, it also allows the identification of gaps that exist where key themes and areas of importance do not currently have prominence in City policy. Where these gaps represent key pillars, or priorities established in the Strategic Plan, they illuminate policy areas that should be examined further to ensure effective alignment with strategic priorities.



The common threads identified among the 38 policies examined above include:

- Economic Development a Priority
- Enhance Arts, Culture, and Heritage
- Sustainability
- Age-Friendly Community
- Supporting Growth and Urban Intensification
- Environmental Stewardship and Leadership
- Increased Partnership and Collaboration
- Talent and Population Attraction / Retention
- Infrastructure Renewal and Asset Management
- Service Delivery Excellence
- Open and Effective Public Engagement
- Improved Transit and Connectivity
- Healthy and Safe Community
- Community Improvement and Revitalization
- Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Active Communities
- Active Transportation and Pedestrian Friendly
- Innovation and Creativity
- Fostering Educational Excellence
- Talent Development and Organizational Excellence

#### **4.1.2.1 Ranking the Common Threads**

Identifying the common themes was then followed with a frequency exercise, with the understanding that the more often the theme appeared, the higher the frequency and relevance.

A criterion was established where 38 times out of 38 represented the total benchmark (with 38 being the total number of policies).

- Frequencies of 20 or greater were ranked as high representation
- Frequencies of 15 to 19 were ranked as moderate representation
- Frequencies of 14 and under were ranked as lesser representation

The most prominent common threads that emerged through the analysis were:

- Sustainability (27)
- Increased Partnership and Collaboration (23)
- Infrastructure Renewal and Asset Management (22)
- Supporting Growth and Urban Intensification (22)
- Service Delivery Excellence (21)
- Healthy and Safe Community (20)
- Economic Development a Priority (20)

The areas of moderate representation were:



- Community Improvement and Revitalization (18)
- Enhance Arts, Culture, and Heritage (18)
- Improved Transit and Connectivity (18)
- Environmental Stewardship and Leadership (16)
- Active Transportation and Pedestrian Friendly (15)

## 5 Consultations Summary

The following section of the report provides a summary of key findings identified from the various consultation activities.

### 5.1 Review of City of Waterloo Community Survey

Metroline Research Group Inc. conducted a Community Survey on behalf of the City of Waterloo. The purpose was to support the Council Strategic Planning process for the 2015 – 2018 Plan by providing key insights from the public, including residents and students, during the Community Input Phase of the project.

The objectives are as follows:

- Identify key areas of focus for the City
- Determine key priorities within the identified areas of focus
- Understand how residents access information from and about the city

A random telephone survey of 500 residents was completed, along with an online survey of 215 completions, and 275 post-secondary student surveys. In total, 990 residents and students of the city of Waterloo were reached.

Quality of Life featured prominently in the random survey with over half of respondents indicating that quality had improved in the last few years. Uptown core improvements, increased vibrancy, and more activity/entertainment based options were seen as influencing this perspective.

Respondents were asked to identify if issues in the following list were high priority, somewhat of a priority or a low priority. While all of the topics/issues were seen as having a least a moderate priority level by the community, they are presented here in descending order, reflecting those of highest priority followed by those of lesser priority:

- Protecting the Environment
- Control Tax Increases
- Encouraging economic development
- Effectively manage growth and intensification: Preserving green space and parks
- Improving active lifestyle resources/assets



- Maintaining and improving transportation
- Increase engagement with the community
- Improve programs for adults over 55 years old
- Engage Students in all aspects of the community
- Improve existing recreational and leisure services
- Increase support to neighbourhood groups
- Provide more support of the arts, heritage and culture
- Improve library facilities

The majority of respondents were satisfied with services received, with 28% indicating 'very good' and 65% responding 'fairly good' for the random sample. Notably, no population sample, either by random, on campus, or online indicated higher than 13% dissatisfaction of services received (at 7%, 4%, and 13% respectively).

In response to questions aimed at gauging the community's level of interest in being involved in budgetary discussions, 44% of random survey respondents, and 57% of online respondents indicated an interest in being actively involved in budget discussions. However, of note were the lower levels of interest from student populations surveyed, of which 27% expressed interest in opportunities to be more directly involved in municipal budget discussions.

When asked by what means participants would prefer to be involved, the majority of randomly sampled participants indicated 'provide feedback online' (at 67%) and the online survey participants indicated 'online survey' (at 78%). The "On Campus" participants indicated a preference for participation in polls or surveys, through a preferred 'online survey' format at 73%.<sup>8</sup>

## 5.2 Interviews with Community Stakeholders

A total of 36 semi-structured telephone and in-person interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders to garner their perspectives and insights related to city of Waterloo's needs, opportunities, assets and challenges.

The interview questionnaires included some common questions for all interviewees along with specialized questions based on the interviewee expertise. Results were aggregated and analysed for commonalities and points of divergence.

Stakeholders contributing feedback included Business leaders, Community leaders, and Leaders of prominent post-secondary education institutions.

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<sup>8</sup> NOTE: The information contained in this section is a summary of the full City of Waterloo Report, "Strategic Plan Development: Quantitative Research with Waterloo residents, students", Prepared by Metroline Research Group Inc. (February 2015) for the City of Waterloo. Information is drawn and paraphrased directly from this report. Please see the full report for details related to methodology and additional content.



## 5.2.1 Summary of Key Findings

The following prominent themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews:

- Quality of place
- Quality of life
- Industry and business growth
- Urban planning and UpTown development
- Post-secondary education
- Municipal relationships

The prominent themes are further broken down by key findings in the sections below.

### 5.2.1.1 Quality of Place

- Respondents indicated a need to enhance quality of place, including aesthetic appeal, to create an environment inviting to locals and tourists, and to help the city attract and retain young professionals and graduates
- Implementing the City's Cultural Plan horizontally across departments, and coordinating urban planning with upcoming projects through increased collaboration, will help ensure quality of place is maximized

### 5.2.1.2 Quality of Life

- Respondents indicated that residents generally enjoy a positive quality of life; however, attention was drawn towards vulnerable groups
- The city is experiencing a widened gap between those of affluence and those closer to or below the poverty line. Issues of accessibility to affordable housing, transportation infrastructure, social or health care services were flagged
- A strong call to advocate for better residential planning, including senior and student accommodations was raised, particularly in light of graduates choosing Kitchener for reasons of affordability and proximity
- Long-term planning for family doctors, health services, and home-based care and recovery, were seen as critical to supporting continued population growth

### 5.2.1.3 Industry and Business Growth

- Respondents recognized local success in innovation, finance, education, and advanced manufacturing, and commended the City for its role in helping lessen the impact of Blackberry downsizing
- Respondents flagged an opportunity for greater visibility for the City, and streamlining regulations and processes, to drive industry growth and sector



diversity. Other sectors with potential for growth include food processing, knowledge-based consulting, social entrepreneurship and tourism

- Kitchener’s “aggressive” business support system was identified as beneficial to the region. Stronger collaboration with partner communities and governments could support Waterloo in securing potential prospects, given that the innovation ecosystem does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries

#### **5.2.1.4 Urban Planning and Uptown Development**

- Wants and needs identified by interviewees include urban expansion, infrastructure, future developments, and Uptown revitalization.
- Many respondents noted that infrastructure is aging and an opportunity to time infrastructure renewal should coincide with planned activities, including the incoming ION stations
- People recognized that the Uptown redevelopment has made a tremendous difference in the city, but could benefit from better consultation processes to ensure better neighbourhoods
- Emphasis was placed on the need to have more consolidated and long-term planning to avoid over abundant student areas, poverty-concentrated neighbourhoods, and a lack of programs or services
- Integration of students within the broader city tends to expose them to the quality of place, promotes increased knowledge and awareness of what the city has to offer, and influences the decision to remain in the area post-graduation

#### **5.2.1.5 Post-Secondary Education**

- Respondents heralded the education sector in Waterloo as one of the strongest and recognized it for enhancing the visibility for the city; however, more proactive and direct engagement is suggested
- The Perimeter Institute, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Institute for Quantum Computing, incubators and accelerators have globally positioned Waterloo as a place at the nexus of theoretical thought, entrepreneurship and business
- Technical colleges are seen as undervalued in terms of their contribution to innovation and the broader economy. An opportunity exists for the city to recognize and celebrate these contributions and their graduates

#### **5.2.1.6 Municipal relationships**

- A common theme revolved around the need for greater harmony of processes and policies among and within City departments, neighbouring municipalities, and Regional government



- The absence of a consolidated service provision challenges residents or local business to deal with multiple departments, causing frustration and increased costs. It was also suggested that Waterloo look to pool resources with other municipalities, to decrease tax burdens
- Areas such as development costs, bureaucratic process, and unaccommodating zoning were flagged as hindrances to further growth
- There was recognition for the City on its progressive efforts to continue to be an age-friendly community
- A proactive approach by the City to long-term infrastructure planning and affordability of housing is encouraged

Key findings and critical detail related to these themes have been incorporated into the SWOT Analysis found below in Section 6.1.

They were also included in the various staff, leadership, and Council activities to ensure constructive background materials informed brainstorming and decision-making at the workshops.

## 5.3 Findings from the Community Conversation Guide

This guide was a means of enhancing the stakeholder engagement process by inviting individuals and groups to collectively examine critical questions about their city. In total, 34 submissions were provided by a combination of individuals and groups.

### 5.3.1 Waterloo's Greatest Strengths (or Assets)

In total 34 respondents or groups of respondents contributed responses to the question, "What do you see as the city of Waterloo's greatest assets or strengths?"

The following list highlights the **Top Five Strengths** or assets identified:

- Post-secondary education institutions
- Parks, green space, trails
- City size (big city amenities, small town feel)
- High tech industries
- Vibrant Uptown (tied for fifth)
- Proximity to Toronto (tied for fifth)
- Employment and competent workforce (tied for fifth)



### 5.3.2 Community Vision Feedback

Respondents were asked, “What is your vision for the city?” In total, 13 themes were identified. They are:

- A pedestrian or cycle-friendly city
- Progressive in Housing Needs and Urban Development
- Community Vitality, Safety and Spirit
- Innovation and Leadership
- Parks, Recreation and Green Space
- Celebrating Local Arts and Culture
- Accessibility and Proximity
- Environment and Sustainability
- Educational Excellence
- Supportive of small businesses
- Roads and Infrastructure
- Vibrant Uptown
- Festivals and Events

### 5.3.3 Top Five Priorities Identified

The following section contains the most prominent priorities as identified by the participants of the community discussion guide.

The **Top Five Priorities** that emerged from the feedback are:

- ION and Improved Transit/Transportation
- Ensuring a High Quality of Life and Place
- Environmental Leadership and Stewardship
- Good Governance and Service Excellence
- Supporting Smart Growth and Urban Intensification

## 5.4 Staff Engagement

Executive and senior staff engaged in a face-to-face, one hour consultation dialogue while front line staff was given the opportunity to offer input through an on-line survey. In total, approximately 116 staff participated.

### 5.4.1 Key Findings

The following section outlines the key findings, aggregated into common themes.



### 5.4.1.1 10 Years from now, the city is ...

To help shape the vision for the city of Waterloo, staff was asked to identify words they would use to describe the city ten years from now.

Common responses included:

- Welcoming
- Safe
- Vibrant
- Collaborative
- Livable
- Active
- A 'Place of choice'
- Wow (factor)
- Prosperous
- Attractive
- Respectful
- Bike-friendly
- Innovative
- Healthy
- Connected

#### 5.4.1.1.1 Staff Survey Word Cloud

Staff was asked to provide three words to describe a vision for the city of Waterloo 10 years into the future. The word cloud below is based on the responses provided. The more often a word was mentioned, the larger it is reflected in the diagram below.

The words most often mentioned include:

- Community
- Innovative
- Vibrant
- Leader
- Diverse
- Accessible
- Safe



Figure 3: Word Cloud from the Front Line Staff Survey



#### 5.4.1.2 Informing Priorities

Participants reflected on key priorities for consideration during the new strategic planning process. These were identified as:

- Economic development and community vitality
- Development of ION
- Partnership and service delivery - increased internal and external collaboration
- Branding exercise to help people identify with the city
- Active transportation networks and pedestrian friendly environments
- A “welcoming space” where people and groups who share common interests can congregate and dialogue
- Internal process improvements - City staff should be using the same modern techniques the public uses, such as apps, social media, and other digital assets
- Reinvigorate recreation programming and delivery
- Support and celebrate arts, culture, and heritage more widely
- Conservation and management of the city’s built heritage
- Planning and maintenance of city infrastructure and assets (Integrate infrastructure demands into long term financial planning)



- Need to prioritize service adjustments to support growth and aging population
- Private sector development - city's ability to plan and direct that development
- Community building and strong, vibrant neighbourhoods

## 5.5 Council Education Session

All members of Council participated in the Council Education Session held on March 9, 2015. The purpose of this session was to garner Council's insight, perspective, and longer-term vision for the city, and generate ideas and identify key areas of priority for the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.

### 5.5.1 Current State Assessment

Council, with the support of a facilitator, engaged in a current state assessment by identifying opportunities and threats. Council was asked to provide feedback on what the four most important opportunities are that the City should be pursuing, and the four most critical threats that need to be considered for future planning.

Sixty-eight contributions were grouped into themes, and voted on to establish priority.

The **Top Five Opportunities and Threats** are itemized below:

#### **Opportunities**

- Support for growth of jobs and the economy
- Building vibrant neighbourhoods
- Redevelopment potential along ION corridors
- Engaged public with broad expertise looking to contribute to making a better city
- Strategic infrastructure investments to create community

#### **Threats**

- Budget policies and constraints
- Infrastructure
- ION construction
- Land uses and running out of space
- Lack of public trust and interest



## 5.5.2 Priorities over next 3-4 years

Council was asked what should be the City's big priorities over the next three to four years. Forty-seven contributions were collected.

The **Top Five Key Priorities** for Council that emerged from this process were:

- ION
  - Maximizing our influence on the ION and its related impacts on behalf of the citizens of Waterloo
- Fiscal Responsibility
  - Sustainability driven by citizen priorities e.g. Address MPI limitations
- Environmental Leadership
  - Define the environmental problems and priorities and look for solutions and best practices. Enhancing our living environment: land, water, air.
- Support Economic Development and Entrepreneurship
  - More jobs equals more people working in Waterloo
- Building a Strong Community through Vibrant Neighbourhoods

## 5.5.3 Focused Feedback Sessions

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 facilitated Focused Feedback Sessions were held with the Operational Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, and members of various Committees of Council. After being provided with the cumulative findings on the draft vision, mission, key findings and priorities identified through the consultation processes, the groups were taken through a collaborative vote-based ranking exercise to narrow the strategic directions and prioritize the prospective goals and objectives.

Top priority objectives and themes identified by the groups included:

- Plan, build and maintain infrastructure to support existing and growth needs
- Maintain and improve transportation network, with an emphasis on a safe active transportation network that is pedestrian and bike-friendly
- Create walkable communities within the city and access to public transportation
- Fully integrate and leverage the ION to encourage investment and growth
- Build mini-cities around the ION stations into multi-modal community-centered nodes (bike-able, walkable)
- Effective management of growth and urban intensification
- Preserve green space and parks
- Leverage post-secondary education for social, cultural, and economic success
- Improve vibrancy in core through walkability, cultural engagement and advertisement, and drawing large events to the city.



- Structured parking facilities for Uptown to enable development
- Infrastructure maintenance and replacement that includes investing in green technologies, adaptation to ION and addressing accessibility issues
- Environmental sustainability and the development of a climate change adaptation plan
- City should be using the same modern techniques the public uses, such as apps, social media, and other digital assets
- Ensure funding mechanisms support service levels for infrastructure and assets
- Increase social capital through neighbourhood building
- Improve safety, child and age friendliness, engaging everyone and creating community hubs
- Increase public participation, communications, transparency, and engagement
- More effective empowerment and utilization of community volunteers
- Greater collaboration between departments, Committees of Council and stakeholders
- Quality of life and the importance of identifying and celebrating Waterloo's unique culture & heritage
- Build a unique cultural identity that goes beyond innovation and technology
- Deliver all services through the lens of inclusivity, diversity and acceptance and supporting the well-being of our citizens
- Increase efficiency in managing costs and improving return on investment and communicating results to the public

## 6 Prioritizing Strategic Opportunities

### 6.1 SWOT Analysis

The following section of this report presents aggregated findings into common themes drawn from the community and stakeholder consultations. Additionally, the detailed demographic and socio-economic analysis results, as well as a comprehensive background review of relevant programs, initiatives and policies inform the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis.

A SWOT is a valuable tool that supports decision making through the identification of internal and external factors that directly influence or impact the organization and its activities.

Strengths are generally attributed to local assets and resources the municipality can leverage, or build on to support local growth and prosperity. Weaknesses are current disadvantages internal to the community that hinder, or impede successful outcomes.



These factors may require improvement, strengthening, or mitigation in order to encourage and support the organization's ability to capitalize on opportunities.

Opportunities are specific elements that the municipality can leverage to overcome challenges and effect positive change. Threats are generally associated with factors that may jeopardize a community's success and represent barriers, or obstacles that may prevent the municipality's ability to implement its strategy.

The purpose of this section is to utilize the SWOT Analysis to inform the overarching goals and objectives and the recommended objectives outlined in the City of Waterloo's 2015 – 2018 Council Strategic Plan.

## **6.1.1 Strengths**

### **6.1.1.1 World Class Post-Secondary, R&D, and Innovation Cluster**

The most frequently cited response across all engagement categories was related to the exceptional strength and competitive advantage that the city of Waterloo has related to the post-secondary sector.

The universities and college are well recognized by participants to be at the very heart of the community's success in technological advancement and innovation, a key driver of entrepreneurship, and a magnet for talent across multiple disciplines, industries, research and development. It is also seen as a driver of population growth, and actively contributing to the ongoing social and cultural advancement of the city.

In addition to student population growth having flourished over the last 10 years, a number of amenities have sprung up that cater to more diverse demographics, which in turn bring a deeper cultural richness to the city through a global mix of student and faculty backgrounds.

World class research institutes and think tanks such as the Perimeter Institute, Centre for International Governance Innovation, and the Institute for Quantum Computing were identified as key contributors to the city's reputation as a thought leader.

The Accelerator Centre and initiatives such as VeloCity that propel innovation and foster youth entrepreneurship were credited as strengths, along with a strong drive toward social innovation emerging from the post-secondary sector.

### **6.1.1.2 Engaged, Supportive, and Proud Community**

An overarching impression in all of the research and engagement was the recognition that members of the community have a great deal of pride in their city. Staff also identified this clearly, either through observation when working with the public, or as residents themselves. Thematically, this sense of civic pride, and the desire to make one's environment the best it can be, was evident throughout the interviews.

When asked in the Community Survey, fully 55% (of 500 respondents) indicated that opportunities for greater involvement in City planning were desired. Further, 44% of



residents would be willing to participate in budget discussions, with an additional 57% of online respondents (out of an additional 215 respondents) stating the same.

#### **6.1.1.3 Resilient and Increasingly Diversified Local Economy**

The Blackberry downsizing and the City's ability to weather this storm is an ideal example of how increased diversification was spurred on in a number of smaller firms. Incubators and accelerators are credited with helping many entrepreneurs transition from work with Blackberry to independent firms, and the growth of the cluster is cited as an interesting development out of a potentially more devastating outcome.

Further, it was noted that the strong supportive industries to technology, such as marketing, sales, communications, and professional services have developed into strong local industries. In addition, the well-established business services and financial sector have contributed to a more stable local economy that continues to support and feed off of talent development and support local employment.

#### **6.1.1.4 Strong Business Start-up and Entrepreneurship Culture**

There was much discussion relating to the knowledge base and the spirit of collaboration and competition in the entrepreneurial sphere. It was noted that with strong programming and supports through the post-secondary institutions, as well as a strong entrepreneurship culture fostered through the various incubators and small business enablers, the city is a hot bed for new business start-ups and early stage companies.

Highly engaged business leadership and local volunteerism were recognized as contributing factors to this entrepreneurship success. Credit was also directed toward the Accelerator Centre, and the University of Waterloo VeloCity program.

#### **6.1.1.5 Excellent Transportation Infrastructure Network**

Transportation infrastructure and the ION project were highly touted, as was the strong utility infrastructure that supports the technology sector. Waterloo has a fairly robust vehicular transportation network that includes connectivity to the 401 corridor through highways 7, 8, and 85, and where 85 traverses the city it provides multiple connectivity points to municipal and regional roads. Although congestion was noted as concerning, the Community Survey identified that 68% of respondents strongly agreed it was easy to get around by vehicle.

Improved investment in public transit was seen as a source to alleviate congestion issues by survey and interview respondents alike. Further, a growing strength in Waterloo is contained in its Active Transportation Network. Two-thirds, or 67% of residents interviewed through the Community Survey use the active transportation network once monthly, with 50% leveraging this means of transportation weekly. It



should be noted that 18% indicated daily usage, and overall younger residents were most likely to use the program (between 18-44 years of age).

#### **6.1.1.6 Large Student, Graduate, and Youth Talent Populations**

One of the greatest strengths identified by numerous stakeholders was the large pockets of undergraduate and graduate population drawn to the city every year by the college and universities. While management of these populations comes with its own challenges, they still represent a steady stream of new talent, youthful invigoration of the city, increased local purchasing power, prospective new residents and active contributors to the community.

These populations support local companies through well-established pipelines of interns and co-op placements, and also result in some of the highest levels of youth entrepreneurship and small business start-ups. This is strengthened through the supportive policies and mechanisms connected to the post-secondary institutions themselves.

#### **6.1.1.7 High Quality of Life, Age-Friendly, and Active Living**

One of the great strengths the city has to offer is contained in the high quality of life afforded its residents and visitors. Waterloo is rich in neighbourhood parks and outdoor skating rinks, over 150 kilometers of trail network, including 60 kilometres of bicycle lanes, a lively Uptown with the Public Square at its centre.

Dedicated active transportation trails, such as the interior Trail Loop provide increased access to key areas within the city and helps reduce carbon emissions. Further, this also supports Waterloo's public image as a Green and Sustainable City, and increases its attractiveness to local and external audiences.

There is an ever growing and vibrant arts and culture scene, replete with festivals, socio-cultural groups, local museums and galleries, and rich local history celebrated in human and built heritage.

Most recently, Waterloo has been designated a global Age Friendly City by the World Health Organization, one of only 14 nominees in Canada. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring age-friendliness, inclusion, and accessibility is built into the planning, operations, and fabric of the city, highlighting its attractiveness as a multi-generational community of choice. Further, active living is a priority of the city and is embodied by the Active Living Program and high quality recreation facilities.

#### **6.1.1.8 Beautiful Natural Environment in an Urban Setting**

Popularly referred to as the “Jewel of the City”, Waterloo Park is a spectacular 45 hectares, or 110 acres, of premium parkland, located in the centre of the city. It is home to multiple heritage features, such as the Log School House and a reproduction



of Abraham Erb's gristmill located on Silver Lake, a man made water resource originally established in 1816.

Surrounded by university campuses, residential neighbourhoods, the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex, the global think tank Perimeter Institute, and the Clay and Glass Gallery, this park acts as a natural oasis for recreation and relaxation in an urban environment. This is not lost on the local population, and when asked in the Community Survey what the top planning priority is in their mind, protecting the environment was number one. This perspective was equally shared by student populations surveyed.

## **6.1.2 Weaknesses**

### **6.1.2.1 Underdeveloped Internal/External Collaboration Opportunities**

A current shortcoming was vocalized as underdeveloped or insufficient levels of intergovernmental collaboration and engagement between the City, Region, and neighbouring municipalities. It was suggested that heightened efficiencies in service delivery, cost savings, and greater benefit to the area as a whole could be achieved. This was highlighted as an opportunity for convergence, facilitating the bureaucratic process, and reducing individual municipal costs.

A desire for the city to have stronger ties to specific parts of the community, particularly with the arts and culture and the post-secondary institutions were identified. It was noted that simply enhancing the quality of dialogue and collaboration toward a long-term plan would be a step in the right direction. In the case of arts and culture, some suggested the Culture Plan approved by Council in 2013 would likely be an important document to direct enacting policies.

Greater meaningful relationship building and collaborative strategic planning with the post-secondary sector was mentioned often as a necessity for collective success. This is not to say that there are no channels of communication, or planning, as respondents commented on positive connections with the City, and sharing in property development and campus planning. The Town and Gown Committee was also identified as a means for expanding the relationship and enabling discussion of different concerns.

Overall, post-secondary institutions see a more assertive and engaged role for the City of Waterloo.

### **6.1.2.2 Overarching Internal Project Management Role**

One of the areas of improvement that was identified was related to more effective internal and cross-departmental coordination. Not only did the need for a more coordinated strategic and tactical approach emerge from the stakeholder engagement process, it was also a prominent theme and recommendation captured in the Waterloo Organizational Review Final Report 2013.



It was observed through the 2013 Forward review process that project management was carried out in relative independence across various departments and that the City lacked sufficient horizontal integration to more effectively facilitate the roll out of initiatives and projects at an organizational level. A strong recommendation was put forth to implement a Project Management Office within the CAO's Office that would take on this role.

Since the Review, the current 2015 Departmental Business Plans reflect a series of structural changes corresponding with the recommendations. Project Management and Strategic Initiative roles are important to the City, and will continue to be important into the future. These functions will become more important as strategic priorities, directions, and objectives become increasingly inter-dependant across multiple divisions within the organization to achieve increased levels of efficiency and success.

### **6.1.2.3 Internal Workforce and Succession Challenges**

The municipality is facing a looming workforce shortage associated with attrition. According to 2013 Forward by 2017 roughly 19% of all full-time staff will be eligible for retirement. Recruiting the right talent, and ensuring the right levels of technical and leadership skills are in place, is critical to maintaining operations and securing the organization's future.

It was noted that there has been a concerted effort on the part of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to develop internal strategies to address succession planning. The corporation should continue to address this issues drawing on leadership of the CMT.

Further, competitive compensation packages, professional development, career pathways, and upward mobility opportunities are ways that municipalities can entice and attract new talent. Participants noted that skilled staff and talent had been lost in the past to other municipalities due to an increasingly competitive labour market.

### **6.1.2.4 Development Decision/Approval Process Onerous and Protracted**

An undercurrent in various communications with stakeholders was the relatively protracted development process. Comment was offered that this may be a result of internal coordination inefficiencies; however, it was identified that neighbouring areas are more proactive, solution oriented, and customer focused. The presence of this, even from a perception perspective, could result in missed opportunities, and frustrate, or hamper efforts to increase the growth and development goals of the city.

A focus on service delivery excellence with a solution oriented approach coupled with improved communications techniques when working with various clients, could work to overcome some of these challenges. Protocols could be standardized and implemented as operational targets across the various client facing departments.



In general, barriers associated with development or expansion were expressed. Inconsistencies between different levels of government, or redundancies in forms or approval processes, were also identified as frustrating and thought to increase confusion and act as a disincentive to consider the city or the Region for investment.

Further, participants would like to see the City more proactively addressing housing problems associated with students. Suggestion was offered that exploration of best practices may assist in improved approaches to planning in this regard.

#### **6.1.2.5 Culture as a Growth Driver not Maximized**

Some have noted that arts and culture is struggling locally. There are concerns that programs or assets are only viewed in terms of their financial viability, instead of the broader good they provide the community. A relative lack of recognition of the social and community building value contained in arts, culture, and heritage was observed as not being fully shared across departments. Culture was viewed as crossing multiple departments within the City; however, its integration within organizational planning and processes was seen as lagging.

There is recognition that culture and art is an important aspect of quality of life. Quality of life enhancements, including good urban planning and infrastructure, in addition to access to arts, culture and recreation were identified as key determinants of attracting high-caliber employees and students.

Long-term planning requires consideration of why people that come to the area for school, research, work, or to teach will decide to stay longer. For example, an important consideration for many professors is what their families will be able to do, yet it is unclear what local arts, culture and recreation assets they can take advantage of. Professionals and newcomers who relocate their families from around the world look for entertainment, as well as social, and other key lifestyle offerings.

The recent Culture Plan is being viewed seriously by community stakeholders, and its multi-departmental approach is being positively received. This is timely, as it was noted by various participants that Kitchener is further ahead with respect to cultural planning, and leveraging its value, as well as providing a more accommodating approach to those working in the cultural sector. More concerted effort and collaboration is encouraged between the City of Waterloo and the arts and culture community.

#### **6.1.2.6 Need to Diversify Economy Outside of Technology**

Although in the section above mention was made of the local economy diversifying within the technology value chain out of necessity as a positive, participants across all categories often mentioned BlackBerry as a wakeup call and need to get behind entrepreneurs. The possibility of other large businesses relocating or downsizing was identified as a potential threat to job security in the area.



While some advocated for diversification within sectors, others see potential contained in emerging sectors, such as tourism, food manufacturing, and value added manufacturing. Overall, there was a suggestion that the city should know what core sectors are already doing well and identify others that could also be supported to encourage increased growth and competitiveness.

#### **6.1.2.7 Need for Results Based Public Communications**

Although significant progress has been made over the previous term of Council related to public relations achievements by the Communications Division, there remains a need to find more effective ways to report back on results to the public. It was noted in various forms of research and engagement that public expectations have increased, particularly in relation to value for money (or taxes) and what their investments (in tax dollars) are producing or going towards. The need for inclusion in understanding the progress that the City officials and staff are making towards achieving goals of the community is critical to effective buy-in from residents.

An emphasis on performance measurement and effective ways to communicate this to the public is a part of the strategic planning process. The development of a Council Strategic Plan Annual Report Card, delivered to the public in a manner that celebrates accomplishments and identifies progress in areas not usually visible to them, can go a long way. Innovative web-based platforms also present increased means of building trust through effective means of engagement with constituents. A dedicated Corporate Communications Strategy is an essential element delivering a clear and accurate message to the public.

#### **6.1.2.8 Supports for Small Business Insufficient**

Concerns were relayed about the City's attentiveness to local businesses and that more could be done to support the needs of smaller businesses. Despite the overall success of entrepreneurs in the city (identified as local strength) and positive changes over the last decade, some respondents also noted that small companies are still "struggling". Examples provided are industries such as light manufacturing, restaurants and retail, and some trades.

The smaller businesses have had greater difficulty accessing resources to support succession planning, mentorship, expansion, or human resources. There was noted confusion over what areas of support the City is providing as compared to other organizations, and the public and private sector. There is a misunderstanding of what services and supports are available, and the level of importance that the City places on supporting its local small businesses outside of technology.

This suggests the need for more effective communications on the existing services the City provides (such as the Small Business Centre) and more coordination with local organizations (such as the Chamber, or BIA) to ensure the voice of small business is being effectively incorporated into public agendas.



## **6.1.3 Opportunities**

### **6.1.3.1 ION Developments and Connectivity**

From every source of engagement or research, development of the ION system and transport hub was seen as a great boost for the area, and the city in particular. Increased connectivity between the three major urban areas in Waterloo Region increases availability and access to larger labour pools, entices increased expenditures and activity in local markets (especially in downtown areas), and encourages increased population growth and reach.

Further, improved connectivity to the Greater Toronto Area was seen as containing specific opportunity to attract increased levels of new talent and entrepreneurship, as well as potentially mitigating the level of resident out-migration.

In addition, ION is a major step forward in city building, that is accompanied by a recognition from external audiences that Waterloo is not a small town (although it may embrace that charm), and who's growth warrants a closer look from an investment, trade, and development perspective.

### **6.1.3.2 University/College and Stakeholder Relations/Collaborations**

A strong opportunity exists for the City to cooperatively develop programs and initiatives to retain student populations post-graduation. This can be done in concert with the post-secondary institutions, community organizations, and Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation.

There is an identified opportunity for greater intergovernmental collaboration and engagement. There is an opportunity for convergence, exploring efficiencies, facilitating the bureaucratic process, and reducing individual municipal costs.

A clear need for enhancing inter-connectivity between industry, government, and education was identified as an opportunity for the City. The City needs to identify how opportunities can result in win-win scenarios, and to be the impetus for creating the environment for those opportunities to manifest.

### **6.1.3.3 Talent Attraction and Retention Initiatives**

Respondents noted that there is an opportunity to retain young talent after they complete their studies. Respondents suggest enhancing the quality of life and quality of space, improving housing options, and helping identify employment opportunities within the city as motivation for staying.

The notion of getting people to love where they live so that they will want to stay is touted as a means of retaining graduates. People need things to do and places to go that are easily accessible. Other incentives were also suggested, such as special programs for entrepreneurs emerging from Universities, or mentorship opportunities to lower apprehension associated with first-time business ownership.



#### **6.1.3.4 Brand Development and Collaborative Marketing Campaigns**

Many respondents believe there is an opportunity for the city to be more on the cutting edge by promoting it as the centre of multiple kinds of innovation; not just in technology, but in urban design, sustainability, and transit. One suggestion was to take the lead in promoting local successes and building brand recognition as a leading place for academic pursuits.

The new Waterloo Region Economic Development (WRED) Strategy and Corporation presents an excellent opportunity for collaboration in marketing and brand development. With WRED mandated to take the lead in external marketing of the area to attract talent, investment, employment and business, it is imperative that the city establishes a unique value proposition for the city itself, in the greater Waterloo Region brand.

Collaboration in this area will allow greater leveraging of assets and resources, as well as ensure that unified messaging of the strength and value in the city is consistently and broadly advertised.

#### **6.1.3.5 Significant Private Sector Interest in Developing Work/Live Hubs**

The downsizing of Blackberry has provided the city with a silver lining, in that it substantially increased the availability of competitively priced, turnkey office and facility space in key locations across Waterloo. This competitive advantage was not lost on firms such as sector specific real estate investment companies like Spear Street Capital<sup>9</sup>, and private interest investors such as Michael Wekerley, CBC Dragon and founder of Difference Capital.<sup>10</sup> These carry significant promise to contribute to continued vitalization of city and strengthening its reputation as an entrepreneurship and innovation hub for technology and new business start-ups. Located near key future IONStations, the local universities, Conestoga College, the Accelerator Centre, and vehicular infrastructure, they hold great promise.

According to respondents, key to the success of developing the areas surrounding these buildings into work/live, commercial, social, and lifestyle hubs is strong levels of coordinated planning, collaborative approaches, and a shared vision for the future of Waterloo among City officials, private developers, and educational stakeholders.

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<sup>9</sup> Spear Street Capital, “Owned Assets”, Official Website: [this link takes you to the Spear Street Capital website](#) ; accessed on 2015-02-26.

<sup>10</sup> Pender, Terry. Waterloo Region Record, “Wekerle now owns six former BlackBerry buildings in Waterloo”, Feb 10, 2015: [this link takes you to The Record official website](#) ; accessed on 2015-02-26.



### **6.1.3.6 Continued Intensification within Urban Boundaries**

In particular, continued intensification of the urban core, or Uptown Waterloo presents significant opportunity. Not only is this of great benefit to expanding capacity for accommodating increased population growth, it also increases the supply of localized purchasing power needed to support Uptown businesses.

Further, carefully planned intensification with an emphasis on mixed-use, work/live, and new business space to accommodate early stage companies will provide increased critical mass of talent, young families, active elders, thinkers, and entrepreneurs that will in turn drive more demand for increased lifestyle, recreation, and cultural amenities in the core.

The city currently has strong building development levels, with key drivers being the Northdale area, post-secondary expansion, as well as growth within Uptown Waterloo. It is important for the city to be able to continue these trends. Furthermore, the Phillip/Columbia corridor is an emerging redevelopment area that should be leveraged.

Preserving green space was the top priority (84%) among community survey respondents with respect to intensification, further highlighting the need to ensure highly appealing natural spaces for congregation and social interaction in the Uptown.

Continued intensification effectively planned in order to maximize the six IONStations, has the potential to transform the city with clusters of sustained commercial, social, and creative space that can be nurtured for years to come.

### **6.1.3.7 City – Region Collaboration on Tourism Development**

Respondents felt the city should be positioning itself to capitalize on important opportunities associated with conferences and sport tourism, in addition to more traditional tourism associated with arts and culture. It was suggested that a formal tourism strategy be considered, potentially in collaboration with the Regional government.

People point to the potential associated with the forthcoming ION service. Further, many of the research centres and think tanks are gaining increased national and international recognition, generating interest in visitations from academics and academic celebrities such as Stephen Hawking. Events of this nature have a tendency to sell-out, draw increased levels of inbound visitations, and heighten exposure to the area.

Recognition was made that stimulating conference activities on a larger scale would necessitate new developments, and that this need is currently underserved. A lack of venues for holding major events was also indicated. However, increased sports related tourism was viewed as an area that could be capitalized on with existing space offerings. Taking a proactive approach to this and ramping up marketing efforts now in order to ensure that a critical mass is set for opening of stations was mentioned.



### **6.1.3.8 Explore Emerging Industry Opportunities**

It was noted that the assets associated with innovation that are regularly championed externally should be complimented by other sectors which have not received as much attention. Thus, some respondents pointed to the growth in food-related manufacturing as an emerging area worth promoting. As the sector grows, some believe it will also lead to more blue-collar jobs in the area, which would further diversify the economy, and support dislocated workers in the region (e.g., closure of Schneider's/Maple Leaf in Kitchener).

The need for more family physicians and recognizing that they have different office needs than decades ago was identified as a potential opportunity area. Physicians require facilities that they can share with others without having to buy into a practice. It was observed that leveraging this need presents an opportunity to explore new models of health care service, with some suggesting Peterborough and Oshawa as possible models.

With recent and planned expansions of medical educational campuses into downtown Kitchener, there is the potential that the city could leverage the influx of graduates to accommodate new practices in the more intensified urban areas planned within Waterloo.

Entrepreneurial supports for those less associated with the technology sector were identified as opportunities. Several people have noted that significant levels of the technology support resources are actually in Kitchener. An opportunity exists for Waterloo to fill gaps and compliment what is occurring in the region, rather than competing directly. It was suggested that supports facilitated through the City should be targeted at small and medium sized companies, rather than the larger ones.

## **6.1.4 Threats**

### **6.1.4.1 Competition from Neighbouring Areas**

One of the greatest threats identified was related to inter-regional competition. This was particularly the case with respect to how progressive the city of Kitchener's business, community and arts and culture supports were as compared to the city of Waterloo. With the location of Communitech, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, and the expansion of the University of Waterloo based VELOCITY Garage start-up incubator into Downtown Kitchener, an innovation enablement hub has evolved outside of city limits.

This is further strengthened by signature high tech firms such as Google locating in the Tannery District, and the concerted focus the City of Kitchener has on strategically branding its role within the broader KW or Regional Waterloo brand as the Start Up City, Leading Edge Cluster Builder, Talent Magnet, and Innovation District – all centred around its Dynamic Downtown.



Significant progress has been made through the City of Kitchener's commitment to invest \$110 million in "catalyst projects"<sup>11</sup> that drive reinvigoration of the Downtown area and transition it into a hub of creative space, knowledge, and innovation. This has included successful redevelopment of the warehouse district into a cultural landscape of creative live/work environments, and the expansion of three university campuses in to the core – University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy co-located with the McMaster DeGroote School of Medicine Waterloo Campus, and Wilfrid Laurier Faculty of Social Work.

These institutions alone will drive well in excess of 600 students through their downtown campuses annually, with traffic likely to increase significantly with the completion of the ION and Go Transit Hub. In essence, these developments position Downtown Kitchener as the gateway to Waterloo Region for those commuting in from the Greater Toronto Area. In light of this, it is imperative that the City of Waterloo develop a unique differentiator and own its role in the broader regional value proposition.

#### **6.1.4.2 Higher Cost of Living Influencing Talent/Business/ Residents**

Income disparities and unaffordable housing make it a challenge for less affluent residents to adapt to increasing living costs in the area. Youth retention, especially in relation to students and graduates was clearly identified as a pressing concern. In general, student's perceptions are described as viewing the city as upper class, or highbrow. Ultimately, these cohorts often choose Kitchener as a destination of choice in the region when completing their education (or they leave altogether).

There is an opportunity to increase youth retention by encouraging more affordable options for young professionals and families, and by providing more lifestyle amenities to suit the demographic. This is not limited to youth, and although a certain level of the aging population is relatively affluent, affordability issues also impact on the elderly cohorts in Waterloo, and may result in their underservicing, or inevitable relocation to other communities.

Further, the differential in cost of living overall also has a depressing effect on attracting and retaining workers, and small businesses, who may move to adjacent lower cost areas in order to increase quality of life, and opt to commute the short distance into the city of Waterloo.

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<sup>11</sup> City Of Kitchener, Economic Development Investment Fund (EDIF); [this link takes you to the City of Kitchener website](#); accessed on 2015-02-26.



#### **6.1.4.3 Lack of Local Value Awareness in Student Populations**

Various stakeholders involved in the consultation process identified a lack of awareness that local populations have, and post-secondary students in particular, of what makes the city of Waterloo a great place to spend time.

With respect to student populations, many travel outside of the city on weekends and non-study periods to larger urban centres or surrounding areas for entertainment and recreation purposes. Increased efforts should be made to more effectively engage post-secondary stakeholders to develop strategies and programs that heighten awareness of the value contained within the city, and what the areas outside of the immediate campus have to offer.

Not only will this have a potentially positive effect on reducing outflow during study years (and increase local expenditures), it will also plant the seed for future consideration as a place of choice to live, work, and play post-graduation, not just to learn.

#### **6.1.4.4 Negative Impacts of ION Construction on the Uptown**

Of the few negative side effects identified concerning the ION, shorter term impacts on business delivery during the construction phase to Uptown Waterloo is of particular note. According to the ION Project Consulting Report commissioned by the Uptown Waterloo BIA, the top five concerns of member businesses related to the construction phase was Customer Vehicle Accessibility, Utility Interruption, Lost Sales, Customer Foot Traffic Accessibility, and Customer Parking.<sup>12</sup> Further, once completed, the top concerns still related to vehicle accessibility, followed by parking availability, increases in rent and property tax, lost sales, and accessible foot traffic.

In response to these stated concerns and needs, the report recommends that the BIA engage in a multi-faceted marketing campaign to drive increased awareness of routes and options, and drive increased sales to the area during affected periods.

Regardless, the ION construction phase still presents a real threat to the city that needs to be actively managed to ensure short and long term success of businesses in the Uptown.

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12 Participants are recognized as BIA Members, who are Uptown businesses, and who responded to the survey (73 completed surveys representing a 16.2% response rate); Uptown Waterloo BIA, "ION Project Consulting Report: Strategic Planning for Construction and Operating Phases", (completed by Laurier MBA Stone, C., Lingard, C., Darling, K., Carter, B., Moriarty, E., and Chambers, S.)



#### **6.1.4.5 Ongoing Fiscal Restraint and Budgetary Limitations**

Fiscal constraints related to tax revenue were identified as posing a threat to resources as the city runs out of developable land. The downsizing of large companies has the potential to impact assessment growth in the near term. Some participants noted that, comparatively, taxes are not that bad for residents in Waterloo, relative to services received in return. That said, the municipality is still in a position where it must look to the future in a careful manner in which the rising cost for maintaining core service delivery is balanced with the desire to drive increased growth.

In an environment where the City is facing possible staff attrition rate as high as 20% by 2017, this also places increased pressure on resources related to succession and transitioning, as well as recruitment of key positions to fill critical skills gaps.

#### **6.1.4.6 Increasingly Competitive Labour Market for Municipal Talent**

The situation related to talent attraction becomes more compounded as the available labour pool for experienced middle management in the public sector continues to shrink. Labour availability in general is not a factor, as there are wide sections of the population looking for employment. However, the challenge becomes more pronounced when looking for the specific types of skill sets required for municipal professional employment and the dwindling interest among younger skilled populations to take public sector occupations.

As municipalities across Ontario, and Canada, contend with the same phenomenon, the competition for highly skilled candidates with longer term career and leadership potential becomes more aggressive. This heightens the need for the City to focus efforts both on ongoing targeted recruitment, and to identify and support talent development within the organization in order to mitigate looming gaps and skill shortages.

#### **6.1.4.7 Infrastructure Challenges**

Infrastructure challenges were associated with the 401 corridor, which, it is believed will be alleviated to a certain degree when the ION is completed. From a funding perspective, challenges may result in reduced assessment revenue due to a lack of available land for new development. As intensification increases within the urban boundary (and particularly in the core) overly concentrated areas may have negative impacts such as increased traffic congestion, and mobility restraints.

Again, the ION may alleviate these issues, however, it is critically important that coordinated efforts are taken by planning and engineering officials to ensure infrastructure solutions coincide with future vertical build-out and intensification. A perception emerged that local infrastructure has not evolved to keep pace with the population growth.



The introduction of 2-way GO service may help to connect Waterloo Region with Toronto and fill a needed infrastructure gap.

Aging infrastructure was identified as a challenge that will cost money to update or replace, and there is a desire among most residents to keep taxes low, even though it is not sustainable in the long-run.

There was an expressed need to focus on leveraging opportunities for complete community building, especially around ION stations, and explore these further.

Of note, is that 68% of respondents in the Community Survey indicated that “Building sufficient infrastructure to support growth”, was a key priority with respect to intensification. This was second only to “Preserving green space/parks”, (identified above in Continued Intensification within Urban Boundaries) which ranked number one (at 84%).<sup>13</sup>

#### **6.1.4.8 Demographic Shifts in Multiple Age Categories**

Changing demographics associated with increased student-age population, declining youth and child populations, and increasing older adult population presents different strains on public and private resources. There are also questions about affordability of services to some segments of the population that were raised by various stakeholders.

There was recognition suggesting that the aging population is in good hands, with cutting edge age-friendly planning being undertaken by the City. With respect to student cohorts, there was greater concern as to whether the increased population is being managed appropriately.

There are concerns about the pace of intensification within neighbourhoods, as well as changes in income-levels, with a perceived narrowing of the socio-economic base in Waterloo. This was viewed in a disconcerting light, with apprehension that lower incomes are being priced out of previously affordable neighbourhoods.

Further, out-migration of youth and post-graduation populations from the city was seen with relative concern. This was attributed by various stakeholders as being related to higher cost of living (noted above) and housing affordability. It was clearly indicated that more strategic and collaborative action was needed to capture more student retention in order to grow the community, secure future leaders, and foster increased talent populations.

A potential solution to this trend may be seen through increased immigration. Between 2006 and 2011 immigration rose from 24.8% to 26.5%, higher than the provincial rate,

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<sup>13</sup> City of Waterloo, “Strategic Plan Development: Qualitative Research with Waterloo residents, students”, (prepared for the City of Waterloo by Metroline Research Group Inc.) Feb. 2015, pg. 20



while the region remained static at 23.1%. Asia represented the largest place of birth of newcomers to Waterloo between census periods aforementioned.<sup>14</sup>

### 6.1.5 What We Want to Be Known For

An effective way to conclude the SWOT Analysis is presented below. Although various sources were drawn from to build out the distinct sections of the analysis above (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), the primary driver was based on themes and findings unearthed through the community engagement processes.

Staff and management perspectives were included where appropriate in order to supplement the community findings. It is critical that all voices are reflected in this process to ensure that the SWOT is grounded in a grass roots and street level reality.

In conclusion, when educational, business, and community stakeholders were asked:

#### What do you want Waterloo to be known for?

The following common themes emerged:

- A place for cooperation
- A place where competition is driving innovation
- A place where innovation thrives in business, entrepreneurship, technology and sustainability.
- Waterloo should be the “epicenter of bold and undiscovered ideas”
- A place full of knowledge and expertise
- A place with vibrant institutions and award winning buildings
- Strong cultural character through arts, culture, libraries and other assets
- Spirit of collaboration in industry and between the City and stakeholders
- A place that is welcoming and inclusive

## 6.2 Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

The SWOT Analysis completed in the section above is a valuable exercise and an important step to identifying relevant options for social, cultural, and economic improvement in the municipality, and the barriers that exist. It also provides greater insight into challenges and strengths related to internal considerations such as organizational behaviour, resource allocation (human and financial).

However, to better understand the city of Waterloo’s ability to facilitate future growth, attract and retain talent, business, and residents, as well as support balanced community

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<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey and 2006 Community Profiles Census



development, it is necessary to dig deeper to determine the Municipality's competitive advantages and disadvantages.

In contrast to strengths and weaknesses, which may be commonly experienced by Waterloo as well as its competitors and neighbouring areas, competitive advantages and disadvantages, will often differentiate an area.

There is a greater likelihood of continued success if the municipality can effectively focus its community building, service delivery, and socio-cultural and economic development activities in a targeted manner. This will support new and existing populations, continued business growth, and foster increased innovation and entrepreneurship to capitalize on those competitive advantages.

The municipality should fully understand its competitive disadvantages, and determine if and how they will influence or impact change, and the potential impact on achieving the community's goals and objectives.

Competitive advantages form the centre of an area's unique value proposition. They represent the "wow" factor that can inspire and motivate prospective investors, workers, thinkers, artists, entrepreneurs, visitors, and future residents to take interest in the municipality. They can also instill a strong civic pride in an area and provide the foundation for stimulating a sense of place in the community. They are beneficial elements that should be leveraged to create positive change and stimulate increased growth and opportunity from the ground up.

Competitive disadvantages are problematic elements that the community must address in order to encourage more investment, population growth, various forms of economic and socio-cultural development, and foster increased local prosperity.

They are factors that place the city at risk of losing potential interest from new investors, visitors, workers, and residents, and jeopardize the community's ability to retain existing talent, businesses, and populations. They represent obstacles to be overcome to prepare the community to capitalize on new opportunities and proactively pursue initiatives that effect positive change.



Figure 4: City of Waterloo Competitive Advantages and Disadvantages

Competitive Advantages	Competitive Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World class universities and college campus, entrepreneurship supports, and incubation services anchored in the city</li> <li>• International Think Tanks and Research Institutes (Perimeter Institute, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Institute for Quantum Computing)</li> <li>• Unparalleled industry and education linkages driving leading edge innovation, research and development, and technological advancement</li> <li>• Education sector globally recognized driver of technology and innovation, and new business start-ups</li> <li>• Strong Waterloo (regional) name recognition and brand perception</li> <li>• High quality of life and beautiful natural environment in an urban setting</li> <li>• Significant cultural and heritage assets – built, social, and natural; and vibrant Arts Sector</li> <li>• High levels of talent and entrepreneurial spirit</li> <li>• Diversified and resilient business sector with strengths in technology, finance and business services, research and development, and advanced manufacturing</li> <li>• Welcoming, diverse, supportive, and engaged local community with strong civic pride</li> <li>• Large student population, including graduate and post-graduate talent pools</li> <li>• Vibrant neighbourhoods with proactive grass-roots community involvement</li> <li>• Multi-generational and multi-cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dwindling land supply and assessment revenue</li> <li>• Slow decision making process as compared to competitor/neighbouring areas</li> <li>• Innovation cluster developed and growing in Downtown Kitchener</li> <li>• Insufficient collaboration with external stakeholders to stimulate and capitalize on new opportunities</li> <li>• GO Train/ION multi-modal transit hub is under development in Downtown Kitchener</li> <li>• Post-secondary relationships need to be improved and better leveraged</li> <li>• Higher cost of living drives students, population, and business to neighbouring areas (e.g., Kitchener)</li> <li>• Lack of internal overarching project management capacity</li> <li>• Lower levels of support for Arts, Culture, and Heritage as compared to neighbouring areas</li> <li>• Current lack of 'Stage Two' business space</li> <li>• UpTown underdeveloped to support incubation and new spin-offs from post-secondary</li> <li>• Difficulty in implementing Northdale Plan and need for increased collaboration and coordination to support balanced growth</li> <li>• Entertainment and lifestyle amenities under-promoted to local students and residents</li> <li>• Lack of robust marketing campaigns to drive more interest, visitation, and tourism in the city</li> <li>• Lack of unique brand for the city of Waterloo, as compared to Kitchener, Region</li> </ul>



Competitive Advantages	Competitive Disadvantages
community supports age-friendly environment, diversity, and equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engaged business community with strong local leadership</li><li>• Stable commercial, retail, and entertainment amenities that support students and residents</li></ul>	

## 7 Strategic Directions

### 7.1 Corporate Mission, Vision and Key Principles

Establishing a strong foundation for the future and respecting the past were dominant themes prevalent throughout the community and stakeholder engagement activities. A clear need to ensure that the vision and mission for the City of Waterloo reflects and respects ‘the people’ was prominently expressed. Not losing the importance of strong municipal government management and fiscal responsibility, it was reiterated that it is the people who are the foundation on which, and for which, the City exists.

That the city is identified as a place that is safe, welcoming, and warm – with a high quality of life that is balanced between its pursuits of business, innovation, education, and economic success, with social inclusion and cultural vibrancy, is important.

The following mission and vision are reflective of the priorities that emerged through the consultation and research phases of the strategy planning process.

#### 7.1.1 Mission

A mission statement guides the actions of the Municipality and captures the reason why the Corporation of the City of Waterloo exists.

The following mission statement emerged through the strategic planning activities:

**The Corporation of the City of Waterloo is a committed team of volunteers, staff, and elected officials that provide leadership and delivery of efficient and effective services to support a vibrant and prosperous community**



## 7.1.2 Vision

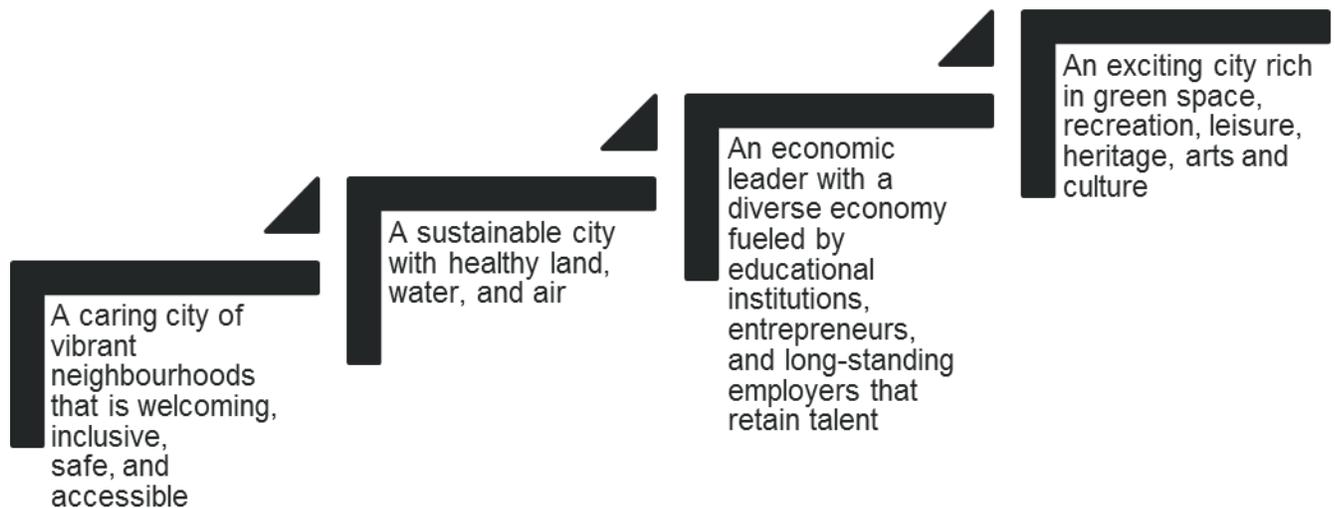
A vision statement represents the *future desired* state of the City. It is meant to capture the goals, values, and collective aspirations of the community at large as it propels itself forward into the future.

The following Vision for the City of Waterloo has emerged through multiple strategic planning sessions:

**Waterloo is world-recognized for discovery, is built on the strengths of our people, and centred on entrepreneurship and opportunity, creating a vibrant, sustainable, welcoming, and prosperous community**

Figure 5: City of Waterloo's Steps to Success

**Waterloo has earned this reputation by being:**



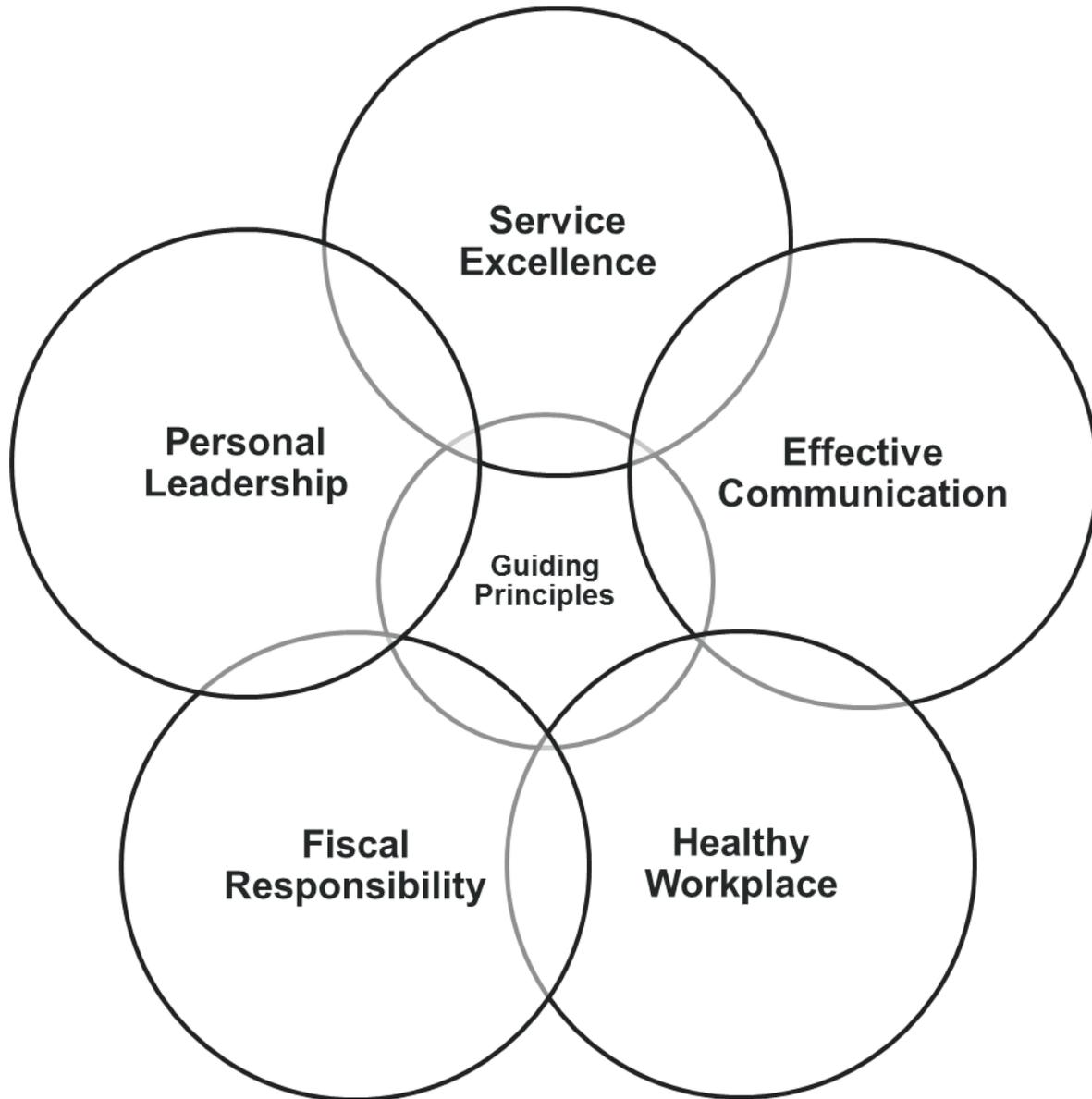
## 7.1.3 Guiding Principles

The City of Waterloo Council Strategic Plan provides the foundation for which the municipality conducts its affairs. It acts as the bedrock behind the direction the City takes in fulfilling its mandate to its residents and community and business stakeholders.



The Plan is grounded in the core values of the Municipal Corporation, and these Guiding Principles drive the municipality in its pursuit to support the needs, goals, values and aspirations of the community at large.

Figure 6: City of Waterloo Guiding Principles



The core values adopted as part of the 2011 – 2014 Council Strategic Plan effectively capture and represent the guiding principles that motivate and influence Council and Municipal staff and leadership as they deliver on the City's mandate. As part of this



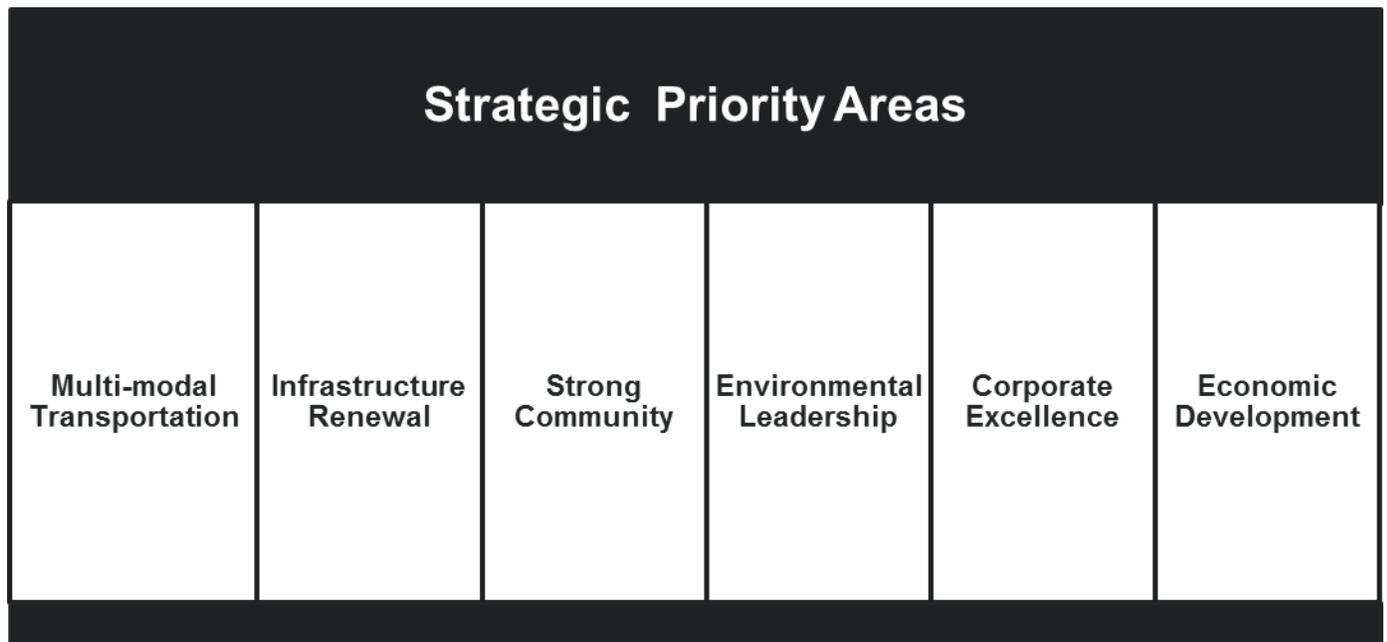
most recent strategy an additional value reflecting Fiscal Responsibility has been added.

## 7.2 Strategic Priority Areas

A core purpose of the strategic planning process is to identify key areas of priority on which Council and staff will focus during Council's term. This section presents a series of six strategic priority areas under which a goal and a series of objectives are described. They support advancement towards the articulated vision, over the longer term.

Taking all of the research findings and community contributions into consideration, Figure 7 highlights the themes that were established as strategic areas of priority:

Figure 7: City of Waterloo Strategic Priorities Areas



In addition, two prominent issues emerged through the research, and from both internal and external consultations:

- The need to overcome organizational and behavioural silos and increase the level of collaboration and cooperation within the City and among stakeholders
- The critical importance of ensuring a sustainable approach to municipal governance, strategic planning, and City management

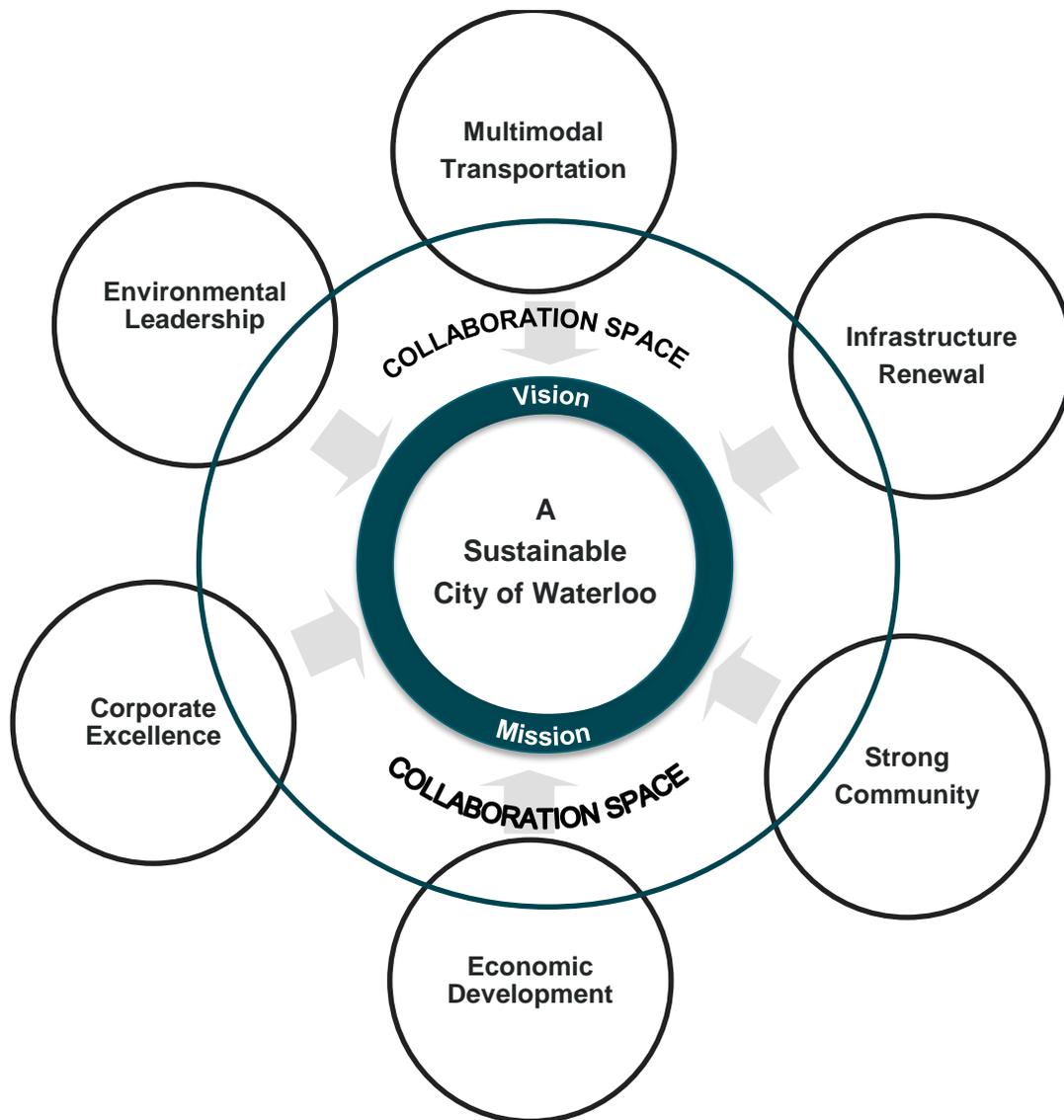
The diagram below in Figure 8 illustrates each strategic priority area and reflects an integrated and cross-priority approach. Circling the centre is a collaboration space; as no one priority can solely achieve the vision. The diagram illustrates how each priority



area feeds into the vision and mission, while drawing on the outcomes from each other.



Figure 8: City of Waterloo Strategic Priority Areas and Sustainability



To promote a sustainable City of Waterloo now and into the future, the Strategic Priority Areas represent the foundational pillars of the strategy, and advance the vision and mission of the Municipal Corporation, with sustainability as the central tenet.

Sustainability has emerged as a concept applicable to municipal planning largely due to a framework developed by Canada's Federal Government in 2005, which identified a four pillar model as a mechanism for federal program funding for municipalities.<sup>15</sup>

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15 Prime Minister's External Advisory on Cities and Communities, "Integrated Community Sustainability Planning – A Background Paper," Sep 2005.



The Federal Government's four pillars have since become a standard starting point for sustainability-oriented municipal planning across the country. The pillars include:

- Environmental sustainability: preserving and protecting ecosystems and responsible use of natural resources
- Social sustainability: social justice and equality including social integration and improved living conditions for all citizens (meeting basic needs, access to growth opportunities, civic engagement opportunities and encouragement)
- Cultural Sustainability: thriving arts and culture, healthy contributions to the other four pillars via the 'creative class,' and the celebration and encouragement of cultural diversity and heritage
- Economic Sustainability: economic activity that is conducive to and supports community development

Not only are the four pillars intended to work synergistically with each other, but they are also designed for horizontal integration across all facets of municipal life and operation.<sup>16</sup>

The diagram in Figure 8 illustrates how the six Strategic Priority Areas feed into the end goal of supporting a sustainable city of Waterloo. The essence contained in each of the four sustainability pillars above can be seen in the Goals and Objectives that are aligned with each priority area (below).

Ensuring that all departments, staff, leaders, and stakeholders are maximizing the collaboration space will be critical to the successful integration and implementation of a sustainability model across the City of Waterloo and into the future.

Further, as the strategic plan is implemented, corporate and political leadership must remain committed to a holistic approach to decision making. It is through a lens that balances multiple perspectives that stronger levels of genuine sustainability are achieved.

## 7.3 Strategic Goals and Objectives 2015-2018

The following section presents each Strategic Priority Area, followed by the identified goal and objectives to be targeted by Council and Staff during the 2015 – 2018 Council Term. These strategic Goals and their corresponding Objectives have been developed by drawing from the results of the research and the comprehensive consultation process.

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16 The Natural Step, "Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP): The Process



### 7.3.1 Multi-modal Transportation

**A well balanced multi-modal transportation network facilitates the ability of people to move within, around, and in and out of the city. Diversifying the methods by which people can get around is an important element of a healthy, sustainable and prosperous city of Waterloo.**

#### **Goal**

The city of Waterloo is a fully connected and integrated community through its multi-modal transportation network

#### **Objectives**

- Maintain and improve existing transportation networks
- Improve access to public transit routes through a robust series of linked transportation networks
- Create hubs around ION station areas that support opportunities to live, work, learn, and play
- Expand the Active Transportation Network by completing trails, adding bike lanes, providing cycling facilities, and creating more walkable communities, while promoting use of the network to the community
- Liaise with the Province to enhance the transportation network with the Greater Toronto Area

#### **Example Initiatives:**

- Advocate for Two-Way GO-Train service
- Complete WaterLoop
- Work with Region to enhance King Street Streetscape in Uptown Waterloo and University Avenue Gateway Opportunities
- Complete Columbia Street West redesign
- Create additional complete streets, including in Northdale
- Complete Station Area Plans, identify implementation funding
- Implement high priority initiatives in the Transportation Master Plan
- In developing areas, upgrade city roads to urban standards
- Encourage growth of an electric vehicle charging station network



## 7.3.2 Infrastructure Renewal

In its simplest form, infrastructure represents the foundation of any city. It includes roads, facilities, and systems which keep the city functional, keeps people moving, and retains access to core needs of people. Ensuring that the necessary structure, facilities, services, and systems are well established and maintained contributes to increased capacity, growth and investment.

### Goal

The City of Waterloo plans, builds, and maintains its public infrastructure to support growth and a high quality of life for its residents

### Objectives

- Plan, build and upgrade infrastructure to support growth and urban intensification, ensuring core needs are met
- Plan and maintain existing city infrastructure and assets by completing and supporting the asset management plan and implementing life-cycle planning and funding
- Ensure that funding mechanisms support appropriate service levels by advocating for additional funding with senior levels of government to support infrastructure upgrades and renewal
- Actively leverage the ION development to enhance improvements to aging infrastructure and to support new infrastructure needs
- Determine the long-term optimal location for fire stations in the city according to Fire Safety Plan requirements
- Encourage increased investment in green infrastructure, including increased energy conservation investment for City facilities

### Example Initiatives:

- Begin implementation of Sanitary Master Plan
- Continue with Parkview Cemetery expansion
- Sport facility development and renewal as per Action Sports Strategy and Outdoor Sport Field Strategy
- Continue core area infrastructure upgrades
- Complete Service Centre rehabilitation
- Continue the conservation of city-owned heritage resources Recreation facility expansion
- Addition of Uptown parking structure



### 7.3.3 Strong Community

**At the core of a community are people. Those individuals that call it home, visitors that travel to the area, volunteers, workers, and all those that drive its local economy. People want to be safe, healthy and active. They want to feel included and want access to services, systems, and opportunities to participate, as and how they choose. Fostering resilient, safe, inclusive and vibrant communities is at the heart of strong and progressive municipal governance and is the base of the city of Waterloo's success.**

#### Goal

The City of Waterloo collaborates with others to build a community where our diverse population have a strong sense of belonging and are active and engaged in community life.

#### Objectives

- Develop a Neighbourhood Strategy focused on harnessing social capital to increase neighbourhood vibrancy and resident leadership
- Support community wellbeing through enhanced opportunities for active living and community engagement
- Enhance the inclusiveness of the community for all ages and backgrounds, including continuing with Waterloo's efforts as an age-friendly city
- Utilize community volunteers more effectively
- Promote the city of Waterloo as a welcoming community, thereby strengthening its capacity to attract and retain newcomers
- Build stronger relationships with post-secondary student populations to facilitate integration with the broader community
- Implement high priority initiatives in the Northdale Plan
- Support implementation of the Waterloo Public Library Master Plan
- Foster a strong sense of place and identity through the development of a high quality, compact built form with convenient access to amenities, a vibrant culture sector, and the conservation of heritage resources.

#### Example Initiatives:

- Develop a Neighbourhood Strategy
- Continue with Age- friendly initiatives, and ensure Age-Friendly status is maintained
- New and enhanced green space planning
- Implement high priority initiatives in the Waterloo Park Master Plan (e.g., festival area)
- Advance East Side Library



- Implement relevant projects from Outdoor Sport Field Strategy and Action Sports Strategy
- Update the City's Urban Design Manual
- Implement high priority initiatives in the Culture Plan
- Approve and begin implementation of the Museum and Collection Strategy and Built Heritage Strategy
- Collaborate with Immigration Partnership
- Approve and implement Older Adult Recreation Strategy
- Implement park and recreation facility amenity upgrades
- Revitalize active living programming
- Collaborate to increase affordable housing units
- Public square water feature implementation
- Develop a Parks Strategy for new and existing parks

### **7.3.4 Environmental Leadership**

**There is a growing importance for people and municipalities when it comes to protecting the environment and better understanding the impact and implications of environmental issues. Acting now by preserving the natural environment, reducing carbon footprint, and building the city in an environmentally sound manner, will benefit future generations.**

#### **Goal**

The City of Waterloo protects the environment and a sustainable future through proactive stewardship

#### **Objectives**

- Adopt a progressive approach to climate change from a municipal governance, health and safety, and city sustainability perspective
- Integrate environmental sustainability leadership holistically across all departments and decision making processes
- Ensure new development, redevelopment, and intensification preserve and contribute to quality green space
- Review and implement high priority energy conservation policies and practices
- Advance the Laurel Creek Watershed Study

#### **Example Initiatives:**

- Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan
- Develop a Green Infrastructure Policy
- Plan for Silver Lake Clean-up
- Develop a Community Energy Plan



- Continue to explore Waterloo Walk and naturalization options in Uptown
- Plan/budget for response to tree canopy preservation/management and other possible environmental catastrophe (i.e. emerald ash borer)
- Continue street light upgrade to light emitting diode (LED)
- Continue reviewing Fleet purchases for “green” standard
- Develop a plan for strategic parkland improvement, expansion or acquisition

### **7.3.5 Corporate Excellence**

**Holding the public’s trust through inclusive, transparent, and fair decision making, responsible financial management, superior service delivery, and effective communications are the hallmarks of good governance for the City.**

#### **Goal**

The City of Waterloo exemplifies service excellence and fiscal responsibility

#### **Objectives**

- Employ fiscally responsible practices and policies that ensure a balanced social, cultural, economic, and environmental approach
- Strengthen inter-departmental and committee collaboration through regular communication and knowledge exchanges
- Deliver legislated, operational, and administrative functions to maximize corporate efficiencies and support public service delivery excellence
- Utilize a comprehensive public communications strategy with multiple outreach channels to inform and engage with internal and external stakeholders
- Establish user friendly channels that facilitate increased opportunities for public participation and input in municipal affairs
- Build stronger relationships with other levels of government, key stakeholders, and community collaborators to foster a collaborative approach to governance
- Demonstrate commitment to service excellence by equipping Council, employees, and volunteers with the tools, knowledge and aspiration to excel in all that they do
- Strive for the continued improvement of customer service

#### **Example Initiatives:**

- Relocate Server Room to manage risk and business continuity
- Refurbish and upgrade technology to increase customer service levels
- Invest in staff training to support service excellence and leadership development
- Automate more tasks for staff and customers
- Increase online public engagement opportunities
- Enhance recruitment, retention, and succession planning initiatives



- Examine the concept of participatory budgeting
- Examine the concept of a centralized customer service
- Reinvigorate joint services initiative committee in collaboration with other regional municipalities

### **7.3.6 Economic Development**

**Economic development is a key and influencing pillar for municipalities to drive tax revenue, business development and expansion, and a vibrant cultural scene. A strong competitive economy fosters the city's entrepreneurship, stimulates opportunity, creates jobs, fuels talent development, and enhances the community's attractiveness.**

#### **Goal**

The City of Waterloo effectively pursues and manages economic growth to stimulate new opportunities and increase investment.

#### **Objectives**

- Keep, grow, start, and attract labour force talent, students, entrepreneurs, and businesses
- Foster strong relationships with the post-secondary sector and effectively leverage partnerships for increased cultural and economic success
- Implement the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy and strengthen key relationships with local and regional economic development organizations, industry associations, and local businesses
- Continue a growth management approach that encourages infilling, redevelopment, adaptive re-use, and includes culture and heritage aspects in new developments and area revitalization
- Direct and support the creation of affordable and accessible creative space, live/work opportunities, incubation space, and suitable facilities for early stage companies, entrepreneurs, and innovators
- Capitalize on the ION rapid transit development to increase business expansion, new investment, and elevated employment around planned station hubs
- Create a distinct brand identity for the city that complements the Regional brand with focus on the growing local research clusters that are gaining prominence internationally, and heighten the city's image as a world class destination for thought leadership and excellence (e.g., Nano-technology, Quantum Computing, Climate Change, Internet of Things, etc.)
- Effectively market the city as a progressive, vibrant, entrepreneurial, and creative location of choice, further strengthening the area's competitive positioning in the world
- Support implementation of the Culture Plan to leverage local cultural capital and enhance the creative capacity, cultural engagement, and vibrancy of the community



- Position the City as a premier, preferred location for sports tourism events

#### **Example Initiatives:**

- Actively participate in implementation of the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy
- Develop West Side and East Side Employment Lands
- Complete Uptown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and initiate implementation
- Leverage opportunities at Columbia/Phillip hub through Station Area Planning
- Increase private sector investment in Northdale
- Review the Development Charge Bylaw for potential exemptions
- Use Station Area Planning to attract jobs and residents
- Embrace and plan around quantum technology, nanotechnology, and other research clusters so the city of Waterloo is the place of choice for this emerging technology
- Implement high priority initiatives from the Culture Plan
- Develop a Corporate Branding Strategy
- Bring forward a comprehensive zoning by-law
- Enhance relationship with external stakeholders
- Update the City's Economic Development Strategy
- Investigate implementing initiatives in the Uptown Vision 2025 Strategy

## **8 Taking Action**

### **8.1 Implementation Plan for 2015 – 2018**

The following section presents the goals and objectives that emerged through the strategic planning process. Objectives are presented in the form of an **Implementation Plan** spanning the life of the 2015 – 2018 Council Strategic Plan. Drawing from the six Strategic Priority Areas (showcased in the previous section), a corresponding strategic goal is stated as a means of further reflecting the expected outcome emerging from the collective implementation of the proposed objectives.

A Lead Department is proposed alongside each objective in the table. That said, as was highlighted in Figure 8: City of Waterloo Strategic Priority Areas and Sustainability, there is a strong likelihood that other departments may share responsibility in supporting the development, delivery, and accomplishment of specific initiatives and objectives.

Objective 'Leads' are chosen based on where the policy directive is substantially the area of responsibility, in order to strengthen accountability and improve efficiency and project management.



Further, as success in achieving the vision and mission of the City of Waterloo is predicated on team work, cooperation, and collaboration, the implementation plan also identifies external Potential Collaborators to support implementation.

Of important note is that the implementation plan does not include all relevant and potential collaborators; it is anticipated that as local stakeholders review the strategy, they will self-identify where there is alignment and are encouraged to communicate their interest in being involved. Engagement will be articulated in departmental business plans and directly through the associated 'lead' responsible for the respective objectives. Committees of Council are recognized as valuable and ongoing collaborators, and will be aligned with goals and objectives where most appropriate by the respective leads.

It is understood that the implementation plan will serve as a useful guide to city staff as Departmental Business Plans are developed and budget discussions are held. Appropriate alignment between the strategy, business plans, and budget allocation is necessary.

### 8.1.1 Strategic Priority Area: Multi-modal Transportation

**Goal: The city of Waterloo is a fully connected and integrated community through its multi-modal transportation network**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Maintain and improve existing transportation networks	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> <li>▪ City of Kitchener</li> </ul>
Improve access to public transit routes through a robust series of linked transportation networks	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> <li>▪ City of Kitchener</li> </ul>
Create hubs around ION station areas that support opportunities to live, work, learn, and play	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> </ul>
Expand the Active Transportation Network by completing trails, adding bike lanes, providing cycling facilities, and creating more walkable communities, while promoting use of the network to the community	Integrated Planning and Public Works	
Liaise with the Province to enhance the transportation network with the Greater Toronto Area	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> <li>▪ Local Municipalities</li> </ul>



## 8.1.2 Strategic Priority Area: Infrastructure Renewal

**Goal: The City of Waterloo plans, builds, and maintains its public infrastructure to support growth and a high quality of life for its residents**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Plan, build and upgrade infrastructure to support growth and urban intensification, ensuring core needs are met	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> </ul>
Plan and maintain existing city infrastructure and assets by completing and supporting the asset management plan and implementing life-cycle planning and funding	Corporate Services	
Ensure that funding mechanisms support appropriate service levels by advocating for additional funding with senior levels of government to support infrastructure upgrades and renewal	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> <li>▪ Local Municipalities</li> </ul>
Actively leverage the ION development to enhance improvements to aging infrastructure and to support new infrastructure needs	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> </ul>
Determine the long-term optimal location for fire stations in the city according to Fire Safety Plan requirements	Community Services	
Encourage increased investment in green infrastructure, including increased energy conservation investment for City facilities	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainable Waterloo Region</li> <li>▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> </ul>



### 8.1.3 Strategic Priority Area: Strong Community

**Goal: The City of Waterloo collaborates with others to build a community where our diverse population have a strong sense of belonging and are active and engaged in community life**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Develop a Neighbourhood Strategy focused on harnessing social capital to increase neighbourhood vibrancy and resident leadership	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Associations</li> <li>▪ Community Groups, Agencies and Funding Bodies</li> <li>▪ Post-Secondary Institutions</li> <li>▪ United Way of Kitchener-Waterloo</li> </ul>
Support community wellbeing through enhanced opportunities for active living and community engagement	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Groups and Agencies</li> <li>▪ School Boards</li> <li>▪ City of Kitchener</li> </ul>
Enhance the inclusiveness of the community for all ages and backgrounds, including continuing with Waterloo's efforts as an age-friendly city	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immigration Partnership</li> <li>▪ Community Groups and Agencies</li> </ul>
Utilize community volunteers more effectively	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Volunteer Action Centre</li> <li>▪ Community groups</li> </ul>
Promote the city of Waterloo as a welcoming community, thereby strengthening its capacity to attract and retain newcomers	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Immigration Partnership</li> <li>▪ Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>▪ Community Groups and Agencies</li> </ul>
Build stronger relationships with post-secondary student populations to facilitate integration with the broader community	Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post-secondary Institutions-Administration and Student Leadership</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Associations</li> </ul>
Implement high priority initiatives in the Northdale Plan	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post-secondary Institutions</li> </ul>
Support implementation of the Waterloo Public Library Master Plan	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waterloo Public Library</li> </ul>



Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Foster a strong sense of place and identity through the development of a high quality, compact built form with convenient access to amenities, a vibrant culture sector, and the conservation of heritage resources.	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1040 342 1430 405">▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li><li data-bbox="1040 415 1317 447">▪ Region of Waterloo</li></ul>



### 8.1.4 Strategic Priority Area: Environmental Leadership

**Goal: The City of Waterloo protects the environment and a sustainable future through proactive stewardship**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Adopt a progressive approach to climate change from a municipal governance, health and safety, and city sustainability perspective	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainable Waterloo Region</li> </ul>
Integrate environmental sustainability leadership holistically across all departments and decision making processes	Community Services	
Ensure new development, redevelopment, and intensification preserve and contribute to quality green space	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainable Waterloo Region</li> <li>▪ Grand River Conservation Authority</li> <li>▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo</li> </ul>
Review and implement high priority energy conservation policies and practices	Corporate Services	
Advance the Laurel Creek Watershed Study	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grand River Conservation Authority</li> </ul>



### 8.1.5 Strategic Priority Area: Corporate Excellence

**Goal: The City of Waterloo exemplifies service excellence and fiscal responsibility**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Employ fiscally responsible practices and policies that ensure a balanced social, cultural, economic, and environmental approach	CAO's Office	
Strengthen inter-departmental and committee collaboration through regular communication and knowledge exchanges	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Groups</li> <li>▪ Industry Stakeholders</li> </ul>
Deliver legislated, operational, and administrative functions to maximize corporate efficiencies and support public service delivery excellence	CAO's Office	
Utilize a comprehensive public communications strategy with multiple outreach channels to inform and engage with internal and external stakeholders	Corporate Services	
Establish user friendly channels that facilitate increased opportunities for public participation and input in municipal affairs	Corporate Services	
Build stronger relationships with other levels of government, key stakeholders, and community collaborators to foster a collaborative approach to governance	CAO's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Region of Waterloo Council and staff</li> <li>▪ Other local Municipalities - Council and staff</li> <li>▪ Local MPs and MPPs</li> <li>▪ Provincial/Federal Government</li> <li>▪ Industry and Community Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Post-secondary/Innovation Collaborators</li> </ul>
Demonstrate commitment to service excellence by equipping Council, employees, and volunteers with the tools, knowledge and aspiration to excel in all that they do	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Groups</li> <li>▪ Volunteers</li> </ul>
Strive for continued improvement in customer service	Corporate Services	



## 8.1.6 Strategic Priority Area: Economic Development

**Goal: The City of Waterloo effectively pursues and manages economic growth to stimulate new opportunities and increase investment.**

Recommended Objectives	Lead	Potential Collaborators
Keep, grow, start, and attract labour force talent, students, entrepreneurs, and businesses	CAO's office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Post-secondary/Innovation Partners</li> <li>■ Immigration Partnership</li> <li>■ Industry Stakeholders</li> <li>■ Waterloo Region CAO's Office</li> <li>■ Provincial/Federal Government</li> </ul>
Foster strong relationships with the post-secondary sector and effectively leverage partnerships for increased cultural and economic success	CAO's office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Post-secondary/Innovation Collaborators</li> <li>■ Community Groups/ Cultural organizations</li> <li>■ Industry Stakeholders</li> </ul>
Implement the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy and strengthen key relationships with local and regional economic development organizations, industry associations, and local businesses	CAO's office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Post-secondary/Innovation Collaborators</li> <li>■ Industry Stakeholders</li> <li>■ Waterloo Region CAO's Office</li> <li>■ Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>■ BIAs</li> </ul>
Continue a growth management approach that encourages infilling, redevelopment, adaptive re-use, and includes culture and heritage aspects in new developments and area revitalization	Integrated Planning and Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Waterloo Region</li> <li>■ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> </ul>
Direct and support the creation of affordable and accessible creative space, live/work opportunities, incubation space, and suitable facilities for early stage companies, entrepreneurs, and innovators	CAO's office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>■ Waterloo Region</li> </ul>



### 8.1.6.1 Strategic Priority Area: Economic Development continued

<p>Capitalize on the ION rapid transit development to increase business expansion, new investment, and elevated employment around planned station hubs</p>	<p>Integrated Planning and Public Works</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>▪ Waterloo Region CAO's Office</li> <li>▪ UpTown BIA</li> <li>▪ Post-secondary/Innovation Collaborators</li> </ul>
<p>Create a distinct brand identity for the city that complements the Regional brand, with a focus on the growing local research clusters that are gaining prominence internationally, and heighten the city's image as a world class destination for thought leadership and excellence (e.g., Nano-technology, Quantum Computing, Climate Change, Internet of Things, etc.)</p>	<p>CAO's office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waterloo Region</li> <li>▪ Provincial / Federal Government</li> <li>▪ Local Businesses</li> <li>▪ Industry Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Post-secondary / Innovation Partners</li> <li>▪ Community Services</li> <li>▪ Community Groups</li> <li>▪ Residents</li> <li>▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p>Effectively market the city as a progressive, vibrant, entrepreneurial, and creative location of choice, further strengthening the area's competitive positioning in the world</p>	<p>CAO's office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waterloo Region</li> <li>▪ Provincial/Federal Government</li> <li>▪ Local Businesses</li> <li>▪ Industry Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Post-secondary Collaborators</li> <li>▪ Provincial/Federal Government</li> <li>▪ Community Services</li> <li>▪ Community Groups</li> <li>▪ Residents</li> <li>▪ Local Development and Real Estate Community</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
<p>Support implementation of the Culture Plan to leverage local cultural capital and enhance the creative capacity, cultural engagement, and vibrancy of the community</p>	<p>CAO's office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local Businesses</li> <li>▪ Provincial/Federal Government</li> <li>▪ Waterloo Region CAO's Office</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▪ Community Stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p>Position the City as a premier, preferred location for sports tourism events</p>	<p>CAO's Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Sport Tourism Office</li> </ul>



## 8.2 Council Strategic Plan Annual Report Card

Transparency and accountability are hallmarks of good governance.

Keeping the community and stakeholders informed of the City's progress towards achieving the vision and advancing the strategy are integral to exceptional civic leadership.

The following section identifies how the City of Waterloo, through implementation of the 2015 – 2018 Council Strategic Plan, will fulfill its commitment to open and informed communications with the public, staff and Council on the progress of the strategic goals and objectives outlined above.

### 8.2.1 Integrated Role of Departmental Business Planning

It is important to understand that the Strategic Plan is just that, strategic. By its very nature, it is not meant to presuppose the minute details of how an objective is going to be implemented at a tactical level. It is, however, meant to establish and identify the most important priorities that the City will focus its efforts on, and outline the objectives that will be undertaken in order to reach its goals.

The seamless integration of the Strategic Plan into Departmental Business Plans provides a tangible implementation method. Business plans will, at the departmental level, drive the budget process, and provide critical insight and information into how achievable the recommended objectives are, what resources are required to act on them, and how they will be accomplished.

Although the Recommended Objectives above are intended to be launched in the Council term (of 2015 – 2018), it is the 2016-2018 budget cycle and approval process that will ultimately determine their final prioritization.

The process of developing Departmental Business Plans are well established at the City already. However, creating an internal process that communicates the progress of each identified objective would not only support the budgeting process, but feed directly into the development of an Council Annual Review and Report Card (described below).

### 8.2.2 Council Strategic Plan Annual Review and Report Card

Undertaking an Annual Review and Report Card of the Council Strategic Plan is a recommendation to the City. The development of an Annual Review and Report Card, prepared by the CAO's office and distributed to the public, staff and Council will work to ensure that the goals and objectives outlined in this plan are measured, and that progress is effectively communicated to the community.



The intent is for each department to report on the objectives that it is leading, highlighting results, progress on key initiatives, and acknowledging successes achieved throughout the previous year.

It is recommended that the community can be fully engaged in this process through encouraged participation in a City Wide meeting where Council presents the Annual Review and Report Card to the community.

Ideally, the Council Strategic Plan Annual Review and Report Card would contain:

- An overview of the Key Strategic Priority Areas focused on over the year
- Telling the Story – “From Vision to Action”
  - Highlighting the objectives and initiatives that have been accomplished
  - Tracking progress – Updating the community on performance measures
- Celebrating our successes:
  - Major community initiatives and events held throughout the year
  - Case studies of successfully implemented programs, project milestones, and completed community initiatives
  - Profiling major accomplishments based on objectives set out in the Council Strategic Plan
- Recognizing our community collaborators:
  - Ensuring that recognition of the contribution of external collaborators into the implementation or advancement of objectives is shared.
- Maintaining momentum: Initiatives and objectives for the coming year.

In sum, the reporting process has a number of beneficial elements. It acts as a yard stick for measuring current performance and informing future decision making and allocation of resources. It also serves to inform the five-year Official Plan Review.

It demonstrates accountability, community engagement, and an active willingness on the part of Council and City Staff to work openly and collaboratively with the residents, businesses, institutions, and other stakeholders that make the city an amazing place to live, work, learn, and play on a daily basis.

### **8.2.3 Performance Measurement System**

A critical component to the successful implementation of the Council Strategic Plan is a performance measurement system. This will allow Council (and by extension the public – through the Annual Review and Report Cards) to measure the progress and accomplishment of the goals and objectives over the life of the Plan.

It is recommended that the City of Waterloo carefully construct a performance measurement system that includes detailed and appropriate metrics for the



Recommended Objectives. This could be structured to utilize existing measures, and/or the creation of other metrics.