



**Strong,
Sustainable,
Together.**

City of Waterloo Strategic Plan / 2023-2026





Waterloo is situated on the land traditionally cared for by the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabe and Neutral Peoples. We acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today.

An aerial photograph of a city. In the foreground, there is a large, modern, curved building with a green roof. The building is surrounded by trees and a parking lot. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a blue sky with white clouds.

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A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a snow-covered path leading through a forest of bare trees. In the distance, two people are walking on the path. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a peaceful winter landscape.

Introduction

Situated in Southwestern Ontario, with a population of 147,350 (2021) the City of Waterloo (“Waterloo”) is located in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada in terms of both population and employment. Home to three leading post-secondary institutions, it attracts some of the best and brightest talent from Canada and around the world. Many people have chosen Waterloo as a place to live, work, play and learn as it offers a harmonious balance of open space, amenities, employment opportunities and a vibrant uptown. However, Waterloo has emerged from the peak of the Covid-19 global pandemic a changed city.

As the city moved through the height of the pandemic, urgent issues such as declining housing affordability, growing awareness related to Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and the increasing urgency for action to address climate change continued to emerge. Waterloo has already taken significant steps to try and address these challenges with the approval of its first Affordable Housing Strategy, the declaration of a climate emergency in November

2019, subsequent adoption of ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 and the creation of an internal staff team that is enabling the City to address Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion within the corporation and the community. At the same time, Waterloo has recognized the importance of growing a diversified economy, providing its residents with a complete community that includes resilient infrastructure and access to safe, sustainable transportation solutions.

There is more that needs to be done and Waterloo has committed itself to an equitable pandemic recovery so that the City can face these challenges with a fully engaged community. Waterloo is working to identify a new path forward to address the challenges ahead and position itself to be future-ready. The development of a new strategic plan is an essential requirement in this process, as it will provide a guide for this new path, which will be based on equity and inclusion and will foster a sense of belonging for the whole community.

Executive Summary

The City of Waterloo follows a hybrid approach to strategic planning. The strategic plan is for the City of Waterloo and for the community. As a result, it was important that the development of the strategic plan consisted of a balanced approach. The process to develop the new strategic plan is rooted in deep and meaningful engagement. The plan itself includes a strong framework that will enable the City and the community to work together to address the challenges of today while preparing us to be future-ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.

The strategic plan serves as a roadmap for the new term of Council to guide decisions, planning and budgeting for the next four years. The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, when implemented, will enable Council and staff to advance City and community priorities, strengthen municipal operations, allocate resources effectively and achieve desired outcomes.

The strategy development was designed to be comprehensive, inclusive and transparent. Engagement was completed over the course of a six-month period and included connecting with Council, staff and the community with a heightened focus on equity-deserving groups. Community consultations offered local partners and residents the opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and aspirations.

In addition to engagement, the strategic planning process included a review of key plans and strategies, the development of a community profile based on a variety of socio-economic factors and demographic data and a review of the current community context that was not reflected in the City's policy framework. Challenges such as COVID recovery, housing and homelessness and the urgency of sustainability and climate change are current issues that needed to be considered as part of the process.

Specific ideas for shaping the strategic plan were supplied via 26 one-on-one community and partner interviews, with more than 500 survey responses in the Municipal Service Satisfaction Assessment (MSSA), 340 responses to the Engage Waterloo online survey, a number of community workshops involving nearly 300 participants, a free community skate aimed at engaging youth and community intercept interviews that were held to survey older adults.

The City of Waterloo led a series of community engagement initiatives to ensure the priorities of equity-deserving groups were integrated in the development of the City's strategic plan. In total, more than 300 children, youth and adults participated in these focused community engagement efforts. These efforts included 50 responses to a tailored survey, eight community workshops involving 240 community members and several one-on-one interviews.

Council also provided meaningful input to the process, reflecting on the observations shared and providing leadership and direction to narrow the focus. City of Waterloo leadership also participated by providing important insights on the vision, mission, guiding principles and strategic priorities. Staff participated in a survey that focused on identifying ways to recognize the hard work involved in implementing the strategic plan and identifying things that the City can do to better communicate the work that the City does. There were also regular updates on the progress of the plan throughout the process.

As a result of the process, a series of foundational statements, strategic priorities, objectives and actions were prepared. The pages that follow reflect the ambitions and aspirations of Council, staff and the community.

Our Strategic Plan 2023–2026

Vision

A leader in sustainability and a future-ready community for all

The City's new vision statement showcases a positive perspective on the future, telegraphing hope and optimism.

Mission

To actively engage, collaborate with and respond to Waterloo's diverse community through bold leadership, empathy and accountability

The City's mission statement explains the municipality's reason for being.

Guiding Principles

The City's Guiding Principles serve as a lens through which all decisions are evaluated. They represent the values of the municipal corporation.

Equity and Inclusion

We build relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and equity-deserving groups and embrace Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

Sustainability

We plan for the long term, prioritizing sustainability, and take meaningful action to address environmental, social and economic goals.

Integrity

We operate with integrity and transparency and we strive for well-considered comprehensive, responsive, diligent and thoughtful decision-making.

Workplace Wellbeing

We commit to promoting wellbeing and providing a healthy, safe and enjoyable work environment for all employees and volunteers of the organization.

Community-centred

We support strong and liveable neighbourhoods, prioritizing community engagement grounded in empathy and understanding.

Operational Excellence

We provide fiscally responsible, exceptional service that meets the needs of residents, partners and equity-deserving groups, employees and volunteers of the City.

Strategic Priorities

The collective input from Council, leadership, staff and the community helped to identify five Strategic Priorities to be addressed over the next four years. The following themes are grounded in a collaborative corporate culture, upon which the Strategic Plan is built:

- Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action
- Complete Community
- Infrastructure and Transportation Systems
- Innovation and Future-Ready

Objectives and Actions

The City further developed 17 Strategic Objectives based on the strategic priorities, focusing on the City's ability to influence change. Actions are outlined under the objectives. Each action has been tailored with input from the City to encompass a breadth of issues to be further addressed in separate department and division business plans and other strategies and initiatives.

The strategic plan will form the foundation for day-to-day decision-making by City of Waterloo Council and staff, informing budget processes and business planning in the years to come. The 2023-2026 strategic plan was developed through an extensive community engagement and strategic planning process involving information sharing and conversations with Council, staff and the community.

Project Overview

The engagement approach used to develop this strategy involved Council, staff and the community with a focus on equity-deserving groups. The process also looked at the internal City structure and considered the interconnectedness among and between departments and divisions and enhanced the understanding about roles in relation to the organization's strategic direction. External engagement included key partners from business and industry, education, other levels of government and a variety of sectors.

Approach

The planning approach was to divide this project into four phases.

Phase 1: Project Initiation

The project started with the Consulting Team meeting with the City of Waterloo to develop a common understanding of goals and objectives and to identify background documents, reports and strategies for review. This project phase set the stage for clear and consistent communication between all relevant parties.

Phase 2: Scan and Engagement

The Consulting Team undertook a series of scans of other relevant strategies and community, employment and business demographics and then established a scan report that reflected key learnings from the analysis process. Details of the scan report were presented as a separate report and are included in the next section. The scan report included summaries of engagement completed by both the Consultant and the City of Waterloo and provided additional context of the strengths, opportunities and desires of the residents of Waterloo.

Phase 3: Draft Strategic Plan

Community engagement including surveys, discussions and workshops were facilitated from November 2022 through April 2023. All comments received were captured and integrated into a draft strategic plan. A working draft of the strategic plan including all key components was developed. This document served as an input platform with leadership, Council, partners and collaborating organizations. The reporting framework will be based on the strategic priorities, goals and actions and will be developed as part of implementation.

Phase 4: Final Plan and Implementation Measures

The draft strategic plan was presented to Council in May 2023. Once the draft was presented, the City sought feedback regarding the draft strategy from Council and the public over several weeks. The feedback was then incorporated into this final version of the strategic plan.

The final strategic plan was presented to Council by the Project Lead and Staff Lead in June 2023. The presentation highlighted the core elements of the strategic plan and emphasized the important contributions of the internal and external engagement processes. With the approval of the strategic plan, the project moves to implementation, which will focus on ongoing conversations within the City and the community.

Vision

A leader in sustainability and a future-ready community for all

Mission

To actively engage, collaborate with and respond to Waterloo's diverse community through bold leadership, empathy and accountability



Corporate Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

The vision statement for an organization is an aspirational description of what the community would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid to long-term future. It provides the foundation for how to get there through future actions.

A leader in sustainability and a future-ready community for all

What does it mean?

Residents of Waterloo and community leadership have emphasized a focus on sustainability and climate leadership as a primary driver for the strategic plan. This was reflected through engagement including the Municipal Services Satisfaction Assessment (MSSA) and workshops with Council and leadership. The vision evokes optimism for the future and a long-term approach to decision-making. Waterloo is also known as an innovative, well-educated community that focuses on doing things differently. The vision closes with the addition of 'for all' to ensure the strength of Waterloo's commitment to building an equitable and inclusive community for everyone.

Mission Statement

The mission statement for an organization outlines its reasons for being. It answers the following questions: What is the organization? Why does it exist? Who are the primary customers? What are the products and services?

To actively engage, collaborate with and respond to Waterloo's diverse community through bold leadership, empathy and accountability

What does it mean?

City of Waterloo staff are dedicated to delivering service excellence, strive for boldness and complete work that is meaningful to the community. The City of Waterloo remains committed to bold decision-making and delivering programs and services in a way that engages residents and responds to the perspectives of all in the community. The City will continue to respond to the needs of the community while also remaining accountable for the decisions that are made.



Guiding principles

Equity and inclusion

Sustainability

Integrity

Workplace wellbeing

Community-centred

**Operational
excellence**



Guiding Principles

Guiding principles encompass the values of the community and the municipal corporation.

They guide the decisions of the organization and outline expected behaviours of its employees and leaders. These principles help guide interactions with internal and external customers and should be considered with every decision made. They support the development of a culture where everyone understands what is important.

Equity and Inclusion

We build relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and equity-deserving groups and embrace Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

Sustainability

We plan for the long term, prioritizing sustainability, and take meaningful action to address environmental, social and economic goals.

Integrity

We operate with integrity and transparency and we strive for well-considered comprehensive, responsive, diligent and thoughtful decision-making.

Workplace Wellbeing

We commit to promoting wellbeing and providing a healthy, safe and enjoyable work environment for all employees and volunteers of the organization.

Community-centred

We support strong and liveable neighbourhoods, prioritizing community engagement grounded in empathy and understanding.

Operational Excellence

We provide fiscally responsible, exceptional service that meets the needs of residents, partners and equity-deserving groups, employees and volunteers of the City.

Strategic Priorities

While the vision, mission and guiding principles outline where Waterloo wants to be, why the City does what it does and how it will accomplish the work, the strategic priorities will start to prioritize the direction the City needs to go.

These directions are generally broader themes and will help guide departmental planning and future decision-making. These directions will be used as a foundation for goals and objectives as well as mapping out deliverables and performance metrics throughout all municipal planning processes. These strategic priorities are designed to be interconnected and work together. Actions identified for a strategic priority may support the outcomes of another and should be interpreted holistically.

Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion

Value that an inclusive city is one that recognizes differences and diversity in planning, decision-making and service delivery for all residents to have equal opportunities and benefits. Through a commitment to Reconciliation, justice, equity and inclusion for all, the City will disrupt and dismantle all forms of discrimination and systemic oppression.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action

Become a leader in environmental sustainability practices and climate action by making transformational changes related to City operations and services while working with the community towards climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

Complete Community

Achieve a high quality of life for all residents and overall community vibrancy through strategic density, diverse housing options and equitably available parks, public spaces and other recreational and cultural amenities.

Infrastructure and Transportation Systems

Expand and support infrastructure and transportation systems in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner that provides residents with resilient public infrastructure and sustainable transportation solutions.

Innovation and Future-Ready

Demonstrate resiliency and readiness to do things differently, address social developments and integrate new ideas through collaboration with key partners while continuing to grow a diversified economy and innovation ecosystem.

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The vision, mission and guiding principles of the strategic plan set out the desired future of Waterloo, while the strategic priorities connect the actions with the strategic direction and set associated goals to track progress over the period of the strategy.

The City of Waterloo strives to be a leader in sustainability and for future-readiness, to be prepared for the challenges ahead whether known or unknown. The next portion of the strategic plan outlines the strategic priorities, goals and objectives that align with the vision. Measuring these goals and objectives will ensure accountability and awareness of the community's progress and achievements.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), which are an urgent call for action. The UN's [Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#) emphasizes that the principle of “think globally, act locally” is essential and action at the local level by local governments is a critical part of achieving the SDGs. The figure below showcases all 17 SDGs for reference.

The City of Waterloo is in alignment with a focus on economic, social and environmental impacts and the strategic plan goals have been linked back to the SDGs. This will strengthen the City's ongoing work with respect to the localization of the SDGs.





Strategic Priority 1
**Reconciliation,
Equity, Accessibility,
Diversity and
Inclusion**



GIZAAGI'IN

Strategic Priority 1

Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion

Value that an inclusive city is one that recognizes differences and diversity in planning, decision-making and service delivery for all residents to have equal opportunities and benefits. Through a commitment to Reconciliation, justice, equity and inclusion for all, the City will disrupt and dismantle all forms of discrimination and systemic oppression.

Objective 1

Invest in accessibility and inclusion to enhance belonging

- Leverage the Accessibility and Inclusion Review to create an action-oriented Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Support an enhanced sense of belonging within all City buildings, operations and service delivery in ways that strengthen relationships with and within equity-deserving groups.
- Prioritize the intersectional needs of youth, older adults, women, faith communities, people with disabilities, racialized peoples, Indigenous peoples, people living on low incomes, newcomers and 2SLGBTQ+ through inclusive and culturally responsive programs, services, policies, funding and communication strategies.
- Proactively respond to identity-based discrimination protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code including, but not limited to, ableism, ageism, homophobia, queerphobia and transphobia, and sexism.

Objective 2

Embed Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion across the organization

- Advance community priorities by developing and strengthening relationships with equity-deserving groups outside of the organization and take action on their priorities.
- Strengthen alliances with support/service organizations to foster system action.
- Incorporate Reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity and inclusion into the organization's policies and practices so that gains achieved are enduring and meaningful across time.
- Implement accountability structures so that the organization is required to take action on disparities that detail inequities for equity-deserving groups.
- Inform decision-making across the organization and review all relevant corporate policies, programs and services using equity and Reconciliation frameworks with a restorative justice approach.
- Become municipal leaders in accessibility and inclusion practices by exceeding minimum Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) standards.
- Collect data to measure disparity and disproportionality within the organization and in the community. Where possible, contribute to data collection of external organizations in meaningful ways.

Objective 3

Advance Reconciliation

- Respond to the 94 Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Justice and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.
- Strengthen the City's leadership in Reconciliation through becoming trustworthy partners with Indigenous Leaders and their respective communities.

Objective 4

Action anti-racism

- Proactively respond to identity-based hate including, but not limited to, antisemitism, islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and additional forms of identity-based violence.



Strategic Priority 2
**Environmental
Sustainability
and Climate Action**



Strategic Priority 2

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action

Become a leader in environmental sustainability practices and climate action by making transformational changes related to City operations and services while working with the community towards climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

Objective 1 Climate leadership

- Work together with organizational and community champions to align activities and achieve climate action mitigation and adaptation goals to create a more resilient community.
- Continue to work towards the City's corporate greenhouse gas emission reduction goals through the continued electrification of our fleet, low carbon retrofitting of existing facilities and adherence to low-carbon ready new construction.
- Utilize our data-driven solutions to address present and historical impacts of climate change for impacted communities.
- Invest in public open spaces and naturalization efforts to preserve and enhance the natural ecosystems in the city.

Objective 2 Environmentally sustainable economy

- Encourage and cultivate environmentally sustainable development practices including implementation of the environmental sustainability standards for Generation Park Waterloo.

Objective 3 Environmental sustainability mindset

- Embed environmental sustainability into internal operational decision-making and evaluate operational decisions with consideration for the City's greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation goals.
- Strengthen education and awareness regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation actions within the City and the community to advance climate action goals.



Strategic Priority 3
**Complete
Community**



Strategic Priority 3

Complete Community

Achieve a high quality of life for all residents and overall community vibrancy through strategic density, diverse housing options and equitably available parks, public spaces and other recreational and cultural amenities.

Objective 1 Invest in arts experiences

- Invest in arts events and experiences in the city, celebrating diversity and uplifting diverse communities.
- Advance the Museum Strategy to maintain and create safe and vibrant public spaces that will promote opportunities for diverse use including investigating future space needs for the City of Waterloo Museum.

Objective 2 Vibrant public spaces

- Leverage investments in community services and infrastructure to comprehensively plan for context-sensitive intensification.
- Commit to and plan for built environments that reduce reliance on automobiles.
- Plan for welcoming, inclusive and accessible spaces.

Objective 3 Complete neighbourhoods

- Support the Region of Waterloo and collaborate with area municipalities and community partners on housing initiatives in our community including homelessness.
- Implement the Affordable Housing Strategy to increase the supply and mix of affordable housing.

- Carry out and monitor the City's Housing Pledge, planning for 16,000 new residential units by 2031.
- Continue to implement and revise the Neighbourhood Strategy to improve neighbourhood interaction, safety and relationships; promote the Neighbourhood Matching Fund and develop plans for age-friendly initiatives in support of the City's membership in the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Objective 4 Actions to meet community needs

- Optimize the use of City-owned lands to achieve strategic objectives.
- Ensure community amenities and facilities are welcoming and accessible to all residents across the community.
- Renew the Community Grants Program in order to improve the grant structure and process, with an emphasis on the changing needs and priorities of the community for the greatest impact.
- Develop new program opportunities that offer a variety of accessible and inclusive services, programs and amenities that meet the diverse needs of the community at large.



Strategic Priority 4
**Infrastructure and
Transportation
Systems**



Strategic Priority 4

Infrastructure and Transportation Systems

Expand and support infrastructure and transportation systems in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner that provides residents with resilient public infrastructure and sustainable transportation solutions.

Objective 1 Sustainable infrastructure planning

- Prioritize environmentally sustainable infrastructure development to improve infrastructure resilience in order to meet the needs of future generations.
- Assess and address the infrastructure gap.
- Identify and plan for required operational, maintenance and rehabilitation/replacement needs associated with new and existing infrastructure while considering ways to minimize the impacts of life cycle costs.
- Construct, upgrade and manage essential infrastructure for indoor and outdoor facilities, water, wastewater, stormwater, underground utilities and other municipal assets to support the long-term needs of the community and natural environment.

Objective 2 Mobility and a connected community

- Continue to further Vision Zero, a strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
- Expand year-round transportation systems to increase connectivity and availability of travel options across socio-economic communities and for persons with disabilities.
- Enhance connections and linkages with external transit systems to support commuting and recreational travel throughout the region and the province while strengthening connections to airports.

Objective 3 Investment in active transportation

- Expand the City's active transportation network to increase community connections and mobility for all.
- Explore ways to improve safety of cycling lanes and pedestrian connections to increase wider utilization.



Strategic Priority 5
**Innovation and
Future-Ready**



Strategic Priority 5

Innovation and Future-Ready

Demonstrate resiliency and readiness to do things differently, address social developments and integrate new ideas through collaboration with key partners while continuing to grow a diversified economy and innovation ecosystem.

Objective 1 Support a diversified economy and innovation ecosystem

- Encourage and support a healthy and diverse economy grounded in innovation that embraces partnerships with post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations and businesses to further develop Waterloo's globally recognized innovation ecosystem.
- Support, invest and collaborate with the growing post-secondary institutions through continued and new partnerships that advance our collective strategic priorities. Leverage the strength of the institutions' problem solvers and leaders to find creative solutions that address complex community needs and challenges.
- Collaborate with community partners on workforce development to help attract and retain diverse talent.

Objective 2 Partner for social innovation

- Identify opportunities and advocate for new and accessible health care services, including a new hospital in Waterloo Region.
- Collaborate with social enterprises to advance the City's strategic priorities, in association with for-profit entities and post-secondary institutions.
- Implement and build on the recommendations of Waterloo Region's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan framework and other related action plans.

Objective 3 Digital opportunities for the future

- Identify and evaluate digital opportunities for services with an intent to improve customer service and ensure coordination across the organization.
- Align digital service projects and programs with inclusion efforts, prioritizing accessibility for all residents in the community.



**Measuring
our success**



Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is a diagnostic tool that focuses on energy, attention and effort, helping to support the City's commitment to its guiding principles and strategic priorities. Throughout the life cycle of the strategic plan Council, staff and community members will seek to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the City's ability to implement the strategic plan. Through an annual strategic plan progress report staff can apply an implementation framework and determine the best ways to implement the strategic plan.

Strategic Plan Progress Report

The strategic plan provides a road map for Council, staff and members of the community by identifying strategic priorities for the new term of Council. It is important that a performance measurement framework is designed to measure and monitor the City's progress on implementing the strategic plan. Implementation of the strategic plan will be done through a variety of actions including:

- 2024-2026 business planning coordinated with the three-year budget;
- The application of performance metrics; and
- An initiative called Community Conversations.

The strategic planning process does not end with the approval of the strategic plan. It is a process that includes a final strategic plan but also focuses on how to implement that plan throughout its life cycle. Implementation of the strategic plan needs to be transparent and include progress reporting which reflects the work of all departments and divisions to implement the strategic plan. The annual progress report will include three components that all connect to create the new performance measurement framework for the City's strategic plan.

Business plans are developed by each department and division in the City. The 2024-2026 Business Plans will be approved in early 2024 and will implement the strategic plan and align with the three-year budget.

The first component of the progress report will include the status of business plan initiatives which allows the City to identify possible barriers to progress and takes a solutions-oriented approach. Business plan initiatives will be categorized to represent actions that are completed, on track, delayed or on hold.

- Completed – These initiatives have been completed as per identified targets in the business plan.
- On Track – These initiatives have progressed on schedule and are on track to be completed as per identified targets in the business plan.
- Delayed – These initiatives are still in progress but have been delayed for various reasons.
- On Hold – These initiatives have not been started or have been stopped due to specific reasons and there is a high probability the initiative will not move forward.

The City's strategic plan process was rooted in deep and meaningful engagement with a focus on equity-deserving groups and staff want to ensure the new strategic plan is a starting point for continuing conversations.

The second component of the annual progress report will focus on defined indicators and targets. These indicators and targets are used to identify opportunities for additional focus or targeted resources. Staff are exploring how the indicators and targets used as part of the United Nations SDGs can contribute to progress reporting. The indicators and targets are being discussed and will be determined in the months following approval of the strategic plan.

The third and final component of the progress report will be focused on Community Conversations to introduce a strong human element to the reporting framework. It is vital that implementation of the strategic plan not solely be measured according to tangible data. The City's strategic plan process was rooted in deep and meaningful engagement with a focus on equity-deserving groups and staff want to ensure the new strategic plan is a starting point for continuing conversations. These sessions will be themed around each of the five strategic priority areas.

Each session will include people from the community that have a vested interest in each of the strategic priority areas. Community Conversations will be a joint effort with Council, staff and willing members of the community for ongoing discussion of how the City can continue to work to meet the needs of all members of the community. The progress report will provide an overview of the Community Conversations and the feedback received through the sessions.

In addition to engaging the overall community throughout the process, the City also engaged with staff. This engagement was focused on reflecting on what staff is most proud of, determining areas of focus for the City and sharing ideas on what to share with the community in terms of the work the City does. The feedback received from staff will play an important role in the Community Conversations and will be an opportunity to share the work that the City is doing with respect to each strategic priority area and how the City is implementing the strategic plan.

City of Waterloo Strategic Plan / 2023–2026

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