



Region of Waterloo

September 25, 2024

Making Decisions that Matter - September 25, 2024

With input from the community, Regional Council sets the direction for the Region as an organization and makes decisions that help improve the lives of Waterloo Region residents every day. Please refer to the minutes for an official record of the meeting.

Region ensures ambulance availability for patients in most need

Council has approved Paramedic Services' updated response time performance plan, which reflects the needs of a growing community and ensures that patients most in need get priority. The changes will enable paramedics to prioritize response to the most urgent calls, such as heart attacks. The updated plan aligns the Region of Waterloo with services in other municipalities, helps to manage staff workload, and prepares us for the new Medical Priority Dispatch System coming next year. Paramedic Services is currently meeting or exceeding the provincial targets for 2024 and is working with hospital and provincial partners on mitigation strategies to ease offload delays and improve response times.

Council calls on Province to continue funding harm reduction

Council is urging the Ontario government to continue funding all existing consumption and treatment sites beyond their proposed end dates of March 2025. The Province recently announced it would close all sites close to schools and limit new locations. Council's request will be shared with the Premier, Ministers of Health and Finance, as well as municipalities operating consumption and treatment sites. Safe consumption sites have helped to prevent thousands of drug overdose deaths. Their closure would put additional strain on emergency services and the healthcare system.

Community housing redevelopment to feature local artwork

Emerging artists are encouraged to submit proposals as part of the redevelopment of Region-owned community housing on Langs Drive in Cambridge. Council approved \$150,000 for the acquisition of permanent outdoor artwork in front of the building's teen

and youth centre. The location is in a high pedestrian traffic area across from William G. Davis public school. Langs Drive residents will help decide on the artwork, and artists are encouraged to consider the history and culture of the Langs Drive community in their proposals. Applications will be available in the coming months.

Council supports a safer crossing along Kissing Bridge Trailway

Council has directed staff to analyze the design and construction of a pedestrian bridge that will make it safer for Kissing Bridge Trailway users. The Conestogo River Bridge project would prevent trail users from having to cross on the shoulder of Line 86 and over the vehicular bridge above the Conestogo River near Wallenstein. Private funding has been pledged to support the design and construction of the bridge. The Kissing Bridge trailway is an important Regional tourist destination that stretches across the northern portion of the Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail from Guelph to Millbank.

Council supports big city mayors' calls for higher levels of government to respond to homelessness and mental health crisis

Council is joining the Ontario Big City Mayors in calling on higher levels of government to take immediate action to solve the homelessness and mental health crisis. The Solve the Crisis campaign requests a Minister and Ministry be appointed with funding, as well as a task force. The Province has provided additional funding for mental health, addictions and homelessness programs, but it does not adequately address the growing crisis and the financial and social impact on municipalities and regions across the province.