

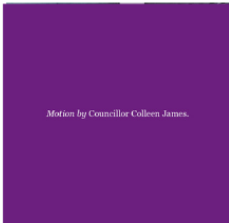




Regional Councillor Colleen James 2025 End of Year Executive Summary



2025 in Review

My Highlights	Number of Council and meetings Attended	Community Motions Passed	Community	Looking Ahead
				

Foreword



Colleen James,
Regional Councillor

"The change I hope to see guides every decision I make. By staying true to my values and remaining persistent in my efforts, I believe I can help shape a future that reflects our highest aspirations."

In October 2022, I was elected to Regional Council by Kitchener residents. As I enter the final year of my term, this journey has been both humbling and transformative. I have had the opportunity to take a deep dive into the wide range of programs and services delivered by the Region, while working closely with staff, community partners, various levels of government and residents to better understand the challenges we face and how our systems can work for everyone. It has not been easy, there have been lots of challenges along the way and tough decisions that have been made.

This executive summary serves as an accountability measure to the public and to those who placed their trust in me. It is intended to provide transparency and insight into the work underway, the progress made, and the priorities that will continue to guide my efforts in the year ahead.



Highlights



Advocating for Traffic Safety

I have been a strong advocate for keeping the automated speed enforcement program in our region because it was a proven tool for protecting pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users. Although the speed cameras have now been banned, I continue to believe they were effective in changing driver behaviour and improving safety. Through public communications and council discussions, I emphasized the importance of using data-driven solutions to prevent collisions and save lives. Safety remains a top priority for our region, and I will continue to explore other ways to ensure our streets are safer for everyone.

In 2025, the Region of Waterloo reached a significant milestone with continued progress on ION Light Rail Transit Phase 2, which will extend rapid transit service to downtown Cambridge. This phase represents a critical investment in equitable, sustainable, and connected transportation across the region. Advancing Phase 2 strengthens access to jobs, education, and services, supports climate and growth objectives, and reinforces the Region’s long-term commitment to building complete, transit-oriented communities. While work continues with provincial and federal partners, 2025 marked an important step forward in turning this long-standing vision into reality.



LRT Phase 2

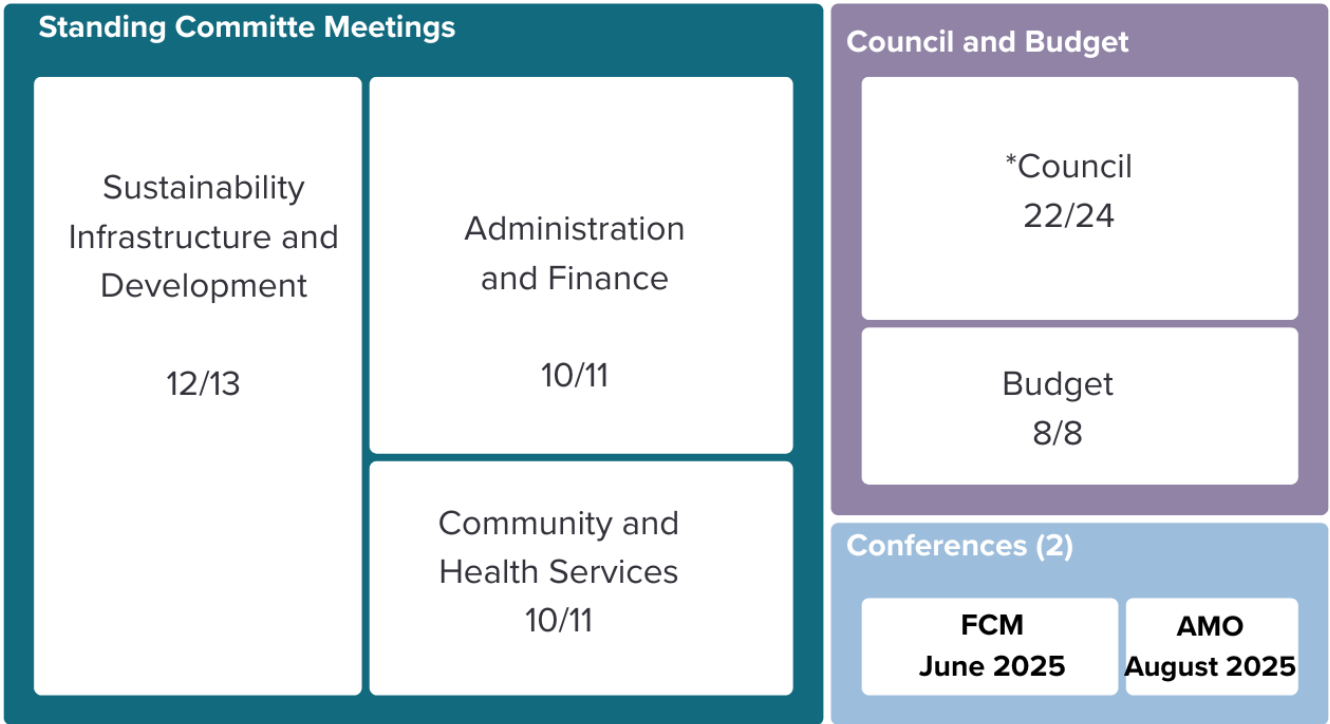


Homelessness in Our Community

In 2025, homelessness continued to affect far too many residents across the Region of Waterloo. The most recent Point-in-Time count identified approximately 2,371 people experiencing homelessness, more than double the number recorded in 2021. This increase reflects ongoing economic pressures, including rising housing costs, limited rental supply, and income instability and the dire need for supportive and transitional housing. While the Region and community partners have expanded shelter capacity, outreach, and prevention supports, the gap between need and available housing remains significant. Increasing the supply of supportive and deeply affordable housing is essential to providing stability, improving health outcomes, and ensuring that residents experiencing homelessness have a clear and dignified pathway back into the community.

The Year in Numbers

Committee and Council Meeting Attendance



Total meetings attended: 92/98
*excludes closed, in camera meetings

What I am Hearing from Our Community

- Public Transit (Cost, Accessibility, and Regional Expansion)
- Public Safety
- Affordability, Homelessness and the need for greater supports
- Water infrastructure and environmental concerns
- Greater funding that supports regional organizations

Motions Passed

- August 2025 - No Right Turns on Red for Major Intersections
- August 2025 - Elect Respect
- December 2025 - Immigration Partnership Funding
- December 2025 - Advocacy to Provincial government for Funding to support more child care CWELCC spaces

CityNews
Everywhere

Councillor asking staff to look into banning right-hand turns at red lights



A no right hand turn sign during construction at an intersection in Baden (Credit: Josh Goeree/570 NewsRadio)



Region of Waterloo

Council seeks coordinated speed cameras across Ontario

Regional Council is asking Ontario's Ministry of Transportation to improve Automated Speed Enforcement cameras with more consistency across the province.

Standard signage and public data reporting across municipalities will help people better understand and trust these safety programs. Regional Council is requesting the provincial government work collaboratively with municipalities to coordinate how they use automated speed enforcement to protect all road users.

Council calls for civility and safety in politics

Regional Council has adopted the Elect Respect pledge and affirmed its commitment to respectful, accountable civic engagement. Respect and diverse voices can lead to stronger democracy and better decisions, while harassment and intimidation towards politicians makes democratic participation harder for many people. Regional Council passed a motion that calls for constructive discussion and appropriate protection and responses when threats are made against elected officials.

Council requests childcare support from the province

Regional Council is calling on the Province of Ontario and the Minister of Education to provide more childcare funding to invest in Waterloo Region families. The Region's current waitlist is 14,000 children for affordable childcare through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program. More funding from the province would support local children, families, and childcare operators in Waterloo Region, where we have high need and sustained population growth. Childcare access is also an equity issue that disproportionately impacts women and

Sustainability and Impact

As Chair of the Sustainability, Infrastructure & Development Committee, I have had the responsibility of guiding important decisions that shape how our region grows, moves, and delivers essential services. This includes leading work on upcoming changes to waste management that focus on increasing diversion, improving efficiency, and building a system that is more sustainable and resilient over the long term.

Through the budget process, I have worked to support investments that strengthen public transit, expand active transportation, and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. These decisions also include securing and stewarding external funding to ensure our region can deliver critical infrastructure projects while being mindful of affordability for residents.

As I enter the final year of my first term, I remain committed to continuing this work, supporting the implementation of approved changes, tracking progress, and maintaining accountability to the community. My focus will remain on sustainability, safety, and smart growth, ensuring our infrastructure decisions reflect the needs of today while preparing our region for the future

One of the highlights of this year was the official opening of the new pedestrian bridge in Kitchener, a project delivered by the Region of Waterloo to improve safety and connectivity for residents. I am incredibly proud to see this important infrastructure come to life, providing a safe, accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists while encouraging active transportation across our community. Projects like this remind me why I am passionate about serving on Council, working to create spaces that make our region safer, more connected, and more livable for everyone.



Image of the pedestrian bridge ribbon cutting.

Community Engagement & Dialogue

One of the greatest privileges of this role has been the opportunity to attend so many meaningful events across our community and to connect directly with residents in diverse settings. From neighbourhood gatherings to cultural celebrations and civic conversations, I am deeply grateful to everyone who welcomed me, shared their experiences, and engaged in honest dialogue. I have learned so much from these interactions, and they continue to shape how I approach my work on Council. A particular highlight was hosting Lunch & Politics, which created space for thoughtful conversations about civic participation, leadership, and the importance of all voices in public life. These moments of connection reinforce why community engagement remains at the heart of my work.





*Councillor Colleen James at her seat in Regional Council
Chambers - Region of Waterloo*

Looking Ahead

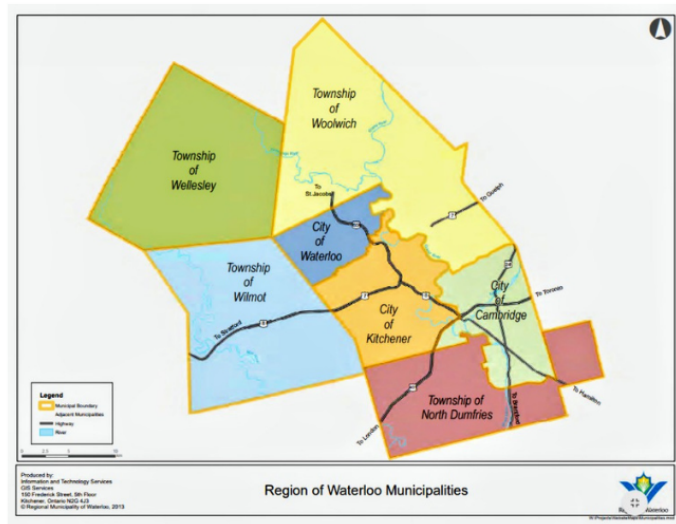
As we look ahead to 2026, an election year that will also mark the conclusion of my first term in office, I remain deeply mindful of both the uncertainty many are feeling and the responsibility entrusted to me by this community. In a time of rapid change, economic pressure, and global instability, it has been a profound honour to serve as your elected representative. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me, and I remain committed to continuing this work with integrity, care, and determination. I hope to continue representing you to the very best of my ability, guided by the needs, values, and voices of our community. I wish each of you a healthy and happy 2026, may it be whatever you need it to be.

“Public service is not about power. It is about responsibility.”



Councillor Colleen James pictured with her family

Region of Waterloo



Contact Me

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"Wishing you a New Year filled with hope, peace, good health, and prosperity, may 2026 bring you exactly what you need to thrive and find joy."

Colleen James

Councillor - Region of Waterloo