

SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN COMMUNITY REPORT



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Region of Waterloo acknowledges that it is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Chonnonton, and Haudenosaunee peoples, and within the Haldimand Tract. This area is also part of the Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement, which emphasizes sharing the land and resources with respect and peace. The Region recognizes the enduring presence and contributions of Indigenous peoples and their deep connection to the land and waterways.

As a library system, we are committed to the principles of truth and reconciliation. We endeavor to foster an environment that respects and acknowledges the rights of Indigenous peoples to their land, culture, and self-determination. Through our collections, programming, and storytelling initiatives, we aim to educate ourselves and our communities.

Our commitment extends beyond words. We actively incorporate Indigenous perspectives and narrations into our collections and activities, and we invite all members of our community to join us in learning and unlearning. We embrace the opportunity to grow together as we share stories and experiences.

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ABOUT THE REGION OF WATERLOO LIBRARY (RWL)

RWL is a multi-branch, rural public library system, made up of 11 branch locations across the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich and supported by a headquarters location in Wilmot Township.

RWL serves 75,100 township residents, and is available to all residents across Waterloo Region.

Region of Waterloo Libraries are important places where residents can connect to each other, and to the world of ideas. RWL branches are places for the community to gather, connect with others, and enjoy a diverse library collection (of books, kits and experiences) with accessible and equitable customer service from passionate staff.

MISSION

Region of Waterloo Library connects residents to each other, and to the world of ideas.

VISION

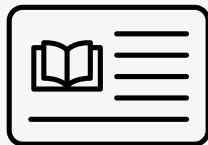
Region of Waterloo Library is a respected and trusted community leader, known for its commitment to strong and healthy communities, and its readiness to adapt, collaborate and innovate. Library spaces are accessible, welcoming and appealing places where community happens and connections are made.

2024 IN NUMBERS



BRANCH VISITS

119,315



NEW MEMBERS

2,568



ACTIVE CARDHOLDERS

17,578

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

PER LIBRARY OPEN HOUR

\$498

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

\$6,589,356

LIBRARY PROGRAMS

\$218,494

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO STRATEGIC PLAN: GROWING WITH CARE

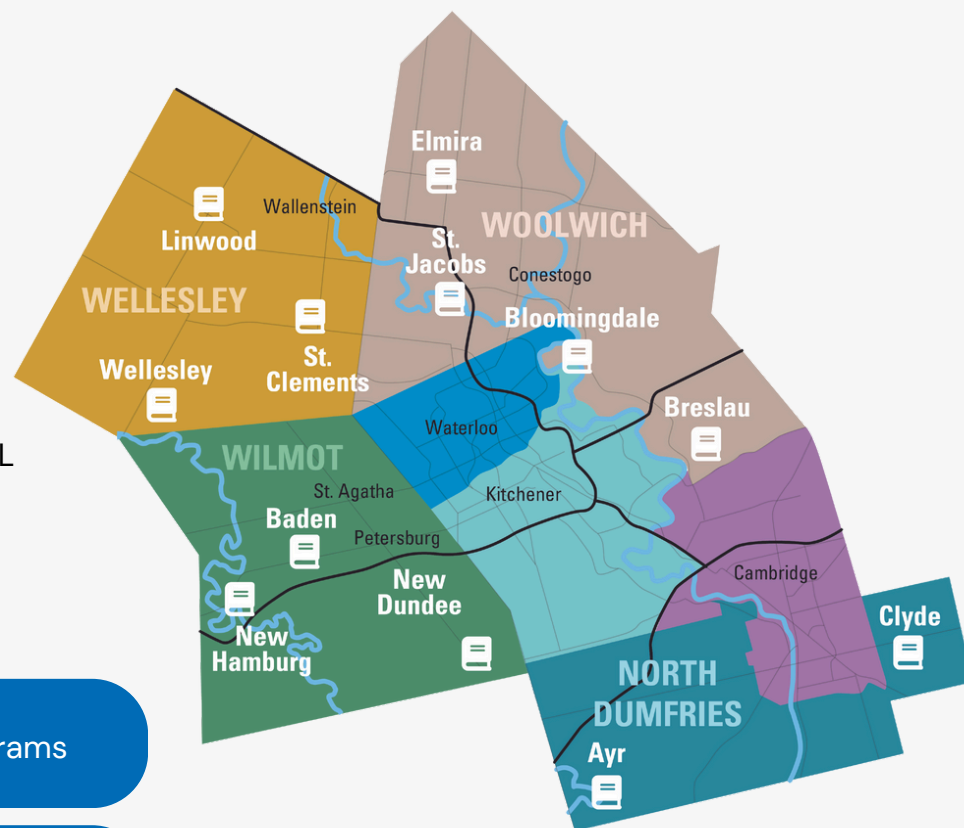
Library Services are situated primarily within the Equitable Services and Opportunities, and Resilient and Future Ready Organization areas of the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Plan 2023-2027: Growing with Care.

PURPOSE

This RWL Service Delivery Plan informs the direction of library services from 2026-2029. The plan outlines what services RWL delivers, and how we plan to provide them to the community.

There are 5 areas of focus within the service delivery plan:

- 1 Welcoming Spaces
- 2 Service Excellence
- 3 Diverse Collections
- 4 Dynamic Programs
- 5 Evolving Technology



Created through extensive public and staff engagement, the service delivery plan informs other key RWL work including a current and future program delivery strategy, annual business plan and annual operating and capital budgeting.

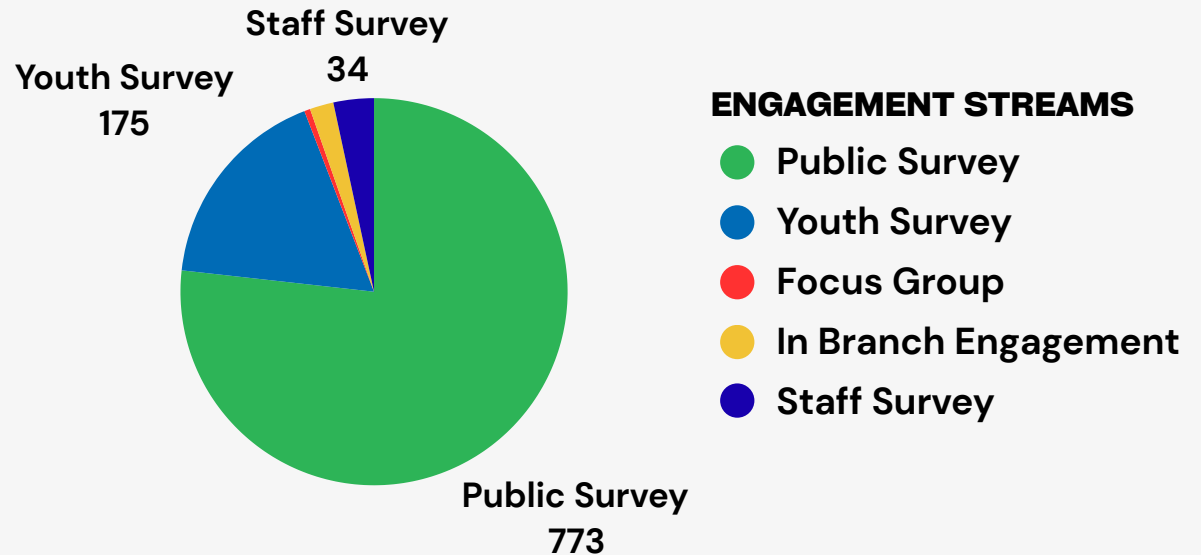
ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

In the fall of 2024, the Region of Waterloo Library launched a month-long community engagement initiative to gather feedback from residents and library users that would inform the Service Delivery Plan.

Almost 1,000 community members engaged with us through an online or in-branch questionnaire, including youth, library patrons and the community-at-large.

One-on-one conversations with individuals and input from RWL staff also helped shape the recommendations in this plan. That process helped to identify what is working well, and where there are opportunities for improvements.

Overall, 89% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the Library's services. Across all age groups, the community expressed a positive experience, emphasizing the Library as a space for growth, learning and connection.



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

The Region of Waterloo Library system sets up four levels of service to make sure everyone gets the best possible library experience from their local branch. We work across the system and with local partners, including Area Municipalities, to meet the unique needs of each community and to provide a consistent quality of library services for all community members. By doing so, we aim to bridge the resource gaps and ensure that everyone enjoys the same great service, no matter which library they visit.



LEVEL 1: SATELLITE BRANCH

Clyde

- RWL currently offers one pop-up satellite library, prioritizing the need for equitable services to all residents.
- Provides limited browsing, hold pickups and returns, and access to staff for library service and community resources.
- Open twice monthly during afternoon hours.



LEVEL 2: NEIGHBOURHOOD BRANCH

Bloomingdale, Linwood, New Dundee, St Clements and St Jacobs

- Serving communities of fewer than 5,000 residents.
- Popular collections and programs are tailored to community needs.
- Some programs feature high-profile performers.
- Branches may not have program rooms.
- Open up to four days per week, offering daytime and evening hours.



LEVEL 3: COMMUNITY BRANCH

Baden and Breslau

- Serving communities of around 5,000 residents.
- Expanded collections of popular materials, local history resources, and unique items.
- A wide range of programming.
- Provide community spaces, study areas, or meeting rooms.
- Open up to five days per week, offering daytime and evening hours.



LEVEL 4: RESOURCE BRANCH

Ayr, Elmira, New Hamburg, and Wellesley

- Serve the largest community within each township, located in communities with more than 5,000 residents, except Wellesley.
- Provide support to smaller neighbouring branches and communities.
- Offer broad range of collections, including popular materials, local history resources, language resources, and unique collections.
- Wide variety of programs and outreach services based on community needs.
- Feature community spaces, study areas, and meeting rooms.
- Open up to six days per week, offering daytime, afternoon, and evening hours.

AREA OF FOCUS #1

WELCOMING SPACES



The Library strives to provide welcoming spaces for visitors of all backgrounds and perspectives, designed to meet a variety of needs.

While many of the current library buildings face limitations in size, layout, or accessibility, the Library is committed to addressing these challenges to ensure all spaces are welcoming, inclusive, and functional for all members of the community.

Working within the limitations of existing spaces, each library branch is organized to meet accessibility standards and provide equitable access for all users.

- As opportunities arise, the Library will explore branch enhancements, expansions, or potential relocations to better serve the community's evolving needs.
 - This may include identifying locations that are more responsive to community demand and growth, ensuring future flexibility for all visitors. Consideration will be given to arranging library spaces to accommodate emerging technologies and optimize community access.
- Creating welcoming, suitable, functional workspaces for library staff that foster a positive work environment and support them in delivering high-quality services.
- Library branches will be designed and arranged according to industry standards, such as the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries (ARUPLO) Guidelines and the Ontario Public Library Guidelines.
- Each branch and Library Headquarters will feature clear Library-branded signage to identify them as Region of Waterloo Library locations, creating a cohesive and recognizable presence in each community and to emphasize the quality of experience residents can expect from the library.
- The Library will continue to explore opportunities to expand or enhance services outside of regular open hours.



AREA OF FOCUS #2

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Library staff across all branches and at Library HQ play a vital role in delivering high-quality service to the community. All staff are equipped with the skills to provide basic technology support to visitors using library services, while staff at larger branches and the Technical Services team at Library HQ may offer more specialized support as scheduling allows.

In addition to technical knowledge, Library staff are deeply familiar with the range of available services and possess strong customer service, reference, and readers' advisory skills. They are committed to providing responsive, knowledgeable, and friendly service to all users.

Public feedback from the Library's 2024 community engagement survey highlights the impact of staff interactions. Residents appreciate the personalized, attentive service they receive and value the staff's approachability and dedication to making each library visit a meaningful experience. Staff are not only skilled in service but also in building relationships within the community, often greeting visitors by name and offering a personalized service experience that strengthens local connections. Staff development opportunities emphasize the importance of empathy in customer service further helping to create a sense of belonging for all community members, ensuring that everyone feels welcome and valued within the Library.



"I'd love to see the library be able to continue to do what it's doing and grow on the programs and services in place, both in person and online."

"The library is friendly with warm knowledgeable staff always prepared to help with questions."

SERVICE EXCELLENCE (CONTINUED)

- The Library is committed to maintaining sufficient staffing levels to meet community service needs.
- Ensuring branches remain open during scheduled hours and that interbranch materials delivery continues reliably is a key operational priority, minimizing service disruptions and supporting system-wide access.
 - To better serve the community, branch open hours will aim to encompass a balance of morning, afternoon, evening, and Saturday hours, whenever possible.
 - Consistent hours across branches will help ensure ease of access for users and allow for better coordination of staff coverage.
 - Branch open hours will be reviewed and adjusted as needed, at least once every four years, with the goal of continually aligning service hours with the evolving needs of the community.
- Ensuring equitable access, recognizing the unique needs of individuals and enabling full participation in the community. The Library strives to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed and supported and offers multiple channels for library users to provide ongoing feedback about their service needs.



“Mild barriers – I have to check hours all the time to make sure I am going when it is open. I have found myself hoping for different or extended hours of operation. But overall I get what I need from this amazing service!”



AREA OF FOCUS #3

DIVERSE COLLECTIONS

Library collections are largely influenced by the communities and individuals of Waterloo Region, based on the popularity of materials that circulate among library users. Library staff consider individual requests for titles and subjects in the development of collections. The growth of the communities served by the library is a significant factor in the selection of materials and development of new collections.

- The Library will continue to provide a diverse range of collections that reflect a variety of viewpoints.
- Collections will be carefully balanced to serve all reading levels, including multi-language learners.
- In response to the growing diversity of the community, collections for newcomers to the Region and Canada will be continuously researched and developed based on community needs and feedback.

"Providing opportunities for my children to learn and grow through reading! I couldn't imagine a world without the ability to access audiobooks and borrowing books."

DIVERSE COLLECTIONS (CONTINUED)

- Materials will be available in a variety of formats, including print, digital, and audio, ensuring equitable access for all library users.
- While expanding digital collections may be limited by budget and licensing restrictions, the Library will continue to explore opportunities in this area and build on its existing collection of unique resources.
- Development and management of collections will follow the Library's materials selection policy with purchase recommendations being carefully reviewed and considered, factoring in cost, community interest, and other criteria outlined in the policy.
- In cases where materials are not immediately available, the Library will make use of interlibrary loan services to fulfill patron requests.

"I love that if my branch doesn't have an item but another branch in the system has it I can have a hold placed and the item arrive in a week"

"I use online ordering for my book club. Large print is offered. It is a marvelous tool which is so very well organized. Appreciate it greatly."



AREA OF FOCUS #4

DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING

Library programming provides an opportunity for community members to forge social connections with one another, which is a key goal of the library's mission and vision. In addition to social interactions, library programs are a source of lifelong learning and skills development for residents of all ages.

- The Library will offer a dynamic range of free programming activities designed to meet the needs and interests of various age groups. These programs will focus on enhancing learning, building skills, and promoting the well-being of participants, while fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- Library programs will be tailored to address the unique needs of each community age group. By providing a variety of programs for all ages, the Library ensures that residents of every stage of life can engage, learn, and connect.
 - For adults and seniors, this may include programming focused on health and wellness, lifelong learning, and social engagement.
 - For teens, the Library may offer opportunities for career exploration, creative expression, and technology-driven learning.
 - Preschool and school-age children will benefit from programs that promote early literacy, hands-on learning, and after-school enrichment that support their development and growth.

"I would like to see more program offerings for younger adults – I am 35 and I don't have kids, and I often see a gap in programming for my stage of life."



DYNAMIC PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

- In response to community feedback, the Library will explore opportunities to adjust the timing, quantity, and locations of programs, where feasible, aiming to ensure equitable access across the system and to optimize participation.
- The Library encourages ongoing feedback from users regarding the programs they wish to see, their experiences with current offerings, and suggestions for future improvements. This feedback will inform program development and ensure that the Library remains responsive to the evolving needs of its communities.
- The Library will actively seek partnership opportunities to enhance and expand program offerings. Collaboration with community services, local organizations, and municipal partners will continue to be fostered to leverage additional resources and expertise. In addition, outreach services will be considered to bring Library programs to localized areas, ensuring access for residents without reliable transportation.
- System-wide programs will be available to maintain consistency and make the Library easily recognizable, whether at a permanent branch or through community outreach. To strengthen this recognition, Library branding options will be explored and implemented where appropriate.



"The library programs were one of the first my children attended, they were a great way for "us Moms" to connect or reconnect as well. Same goes for the programming for all ages... interesting topics and connecting with others in the community... I have lived in this community all my life but would imagine it is also a good way for newcomers to meet others."



AREA OF FOCUS #5

EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

Library service offerings are constantly evolving to respond to the needs and wants of the community. In an increasingly digital-focused society, individuals can easily lose sight of the skills and upkeep needed to ensure they are equipped to function in a digital space. The library strives to be a source where residents can keep informed of available technology, test their knowledge and skills, and practice with new technologies. Offering unique collections, programs that factor in new software and equipment, and try-before-you-buy materials, these services are intended to bring evolving technology directly to residents, where they can discover and explore without bearing the financial burden.

- The Library will provide access to technology through in-branch hardware and software services, as well as online digital platforms and resources.
 - The community has come to rely on the Library for internet access, including reliable Wi-Fi and public computer stations at all branches, ensuring all residents have access to essential technology.
- Recognizing that technology is constantly evolving, the Library strives to keep pace with the rapid growth of emerging technology services.
 - This includes providing reliable internet connections, access to high-quality information and resources, and try-before-you-buy opportunities for technology.

"Online services are great for me. I love the audiobooks. As a senior living alone these books are my life saver."



EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY (CONTINUED)

- To further support the community's digital literacy, the Library will explore training and educational opportunities in areas such as tech help services, online educational courses, and maker culture tools. These offerings will aim to enhance digital skills and empower residents to benefit from the available technology.
- In response to the community's needs for technology-focused education and support, the Library will continue to explore new ways to integrate innovative digital services, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and adaptive technologies. These services will help users learn, understand, and better utilize new technologies, providing them with the resources needed to succeed in an increasingly digital world.
- The Library will utilize advanced technology tools to enhance access to its collections, programs, and services and ensure effective communication with residents.
- The Library will continue to strengthen its online presence through a dedicated website, online library catalogue, and social media platforms.

"I love that the printing and computer access are so easy."





LOOKING AHEAD

The Library is committed to providing exceptional service, fostering a sense of belonging, and ensuring access to a wide range of resources for all members of the community.

Through continuous feedback and engagement, we are dedicated to evolving our services, collections, programming, and technology to meet the changing needs of residents.

We will continue to focus on offering welcoming spaces, service excellence, diverse collections, innovative programming, and cutting-edge technology, to create an environment where learning, growth, and connection thrive.

RWL will continue to explore new opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, and outreach to expand our reach, maximize available resources, and enhance the impact we have on individuals and communities.

Looking ahead to the next four years, the Library is excited to build on our strong foundation, adapting to the evolving needs of our residents while remaining a trusted and vital community space for all.

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RWLIBRARY.CA

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