



2020 was a year like no other

With the Canadian onset of a global pandemic, the rise of justice issues and movements like Black Lives Matter, the major transformation of our communities and our lives, 2020 brought to the forefront the issues that we as Canadians, and global citizens, must pay attention to and address.

And it was a year that clearly demonstrated just how possible transformational change is — when we recognize something as a clear, immediate, and existential threat to our lives and our way of living.

Just before the COVID-19 virus arrived in Canada, climate change was a major focus and priority for citizens and all levels of government. Understandably, the focus changed for a short while as we all planned and implemented ways to keep each other safe during this historic time. Quickly though, the conversation returned to integrate the need for a green recovery. It became clear that this is our opportunity to change the way we work. Now that we have shifted our paradigms, “going back” to the old ways of operating is returning to an unsustainable way of working and living.

At Sustainable Waterloo Region, we saw this shift, as well as the deeper integration of the understanding of the intersectionality of work in the environment sector. In our programs and in our community engagement, this became central to the work that we do.

Reporting for 2020 has been a challenge. All the data is unusual, to say the least. Our members and partners are operating differently. For some, this has created great strides forward to reduce their material impact in all areas, including operations, building emissions, and transportation. For others, it created greater environmental challenges such as increased waste and/or water use, more energy spent for fewer employees in workplaces, and many others.

As you read this year’s report, we hope you recognize some of the ways that 2020 is an anomaly, and at the same time, how it is a beacon for the change we can accomplish, when we really need to. The work ahead of us is critical. We are in a time when change can no longer wait. The team, programs, projects, and board of SWR are focusing on the ways we work to move our community forward, both step-wise and in giant leaps and bounds.

We hope you enjoy this Year End Report. There are stories of inspiration, of challenges, of mind-shifting changes. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to work to build a more fully and truly sustainable Waterloo region. Join us to create a better future and stronger economy together. Now is the time, and we can do it – together.



Barry Colbert Ph.D.
Board Chair



Tova Davidson
Executive Director

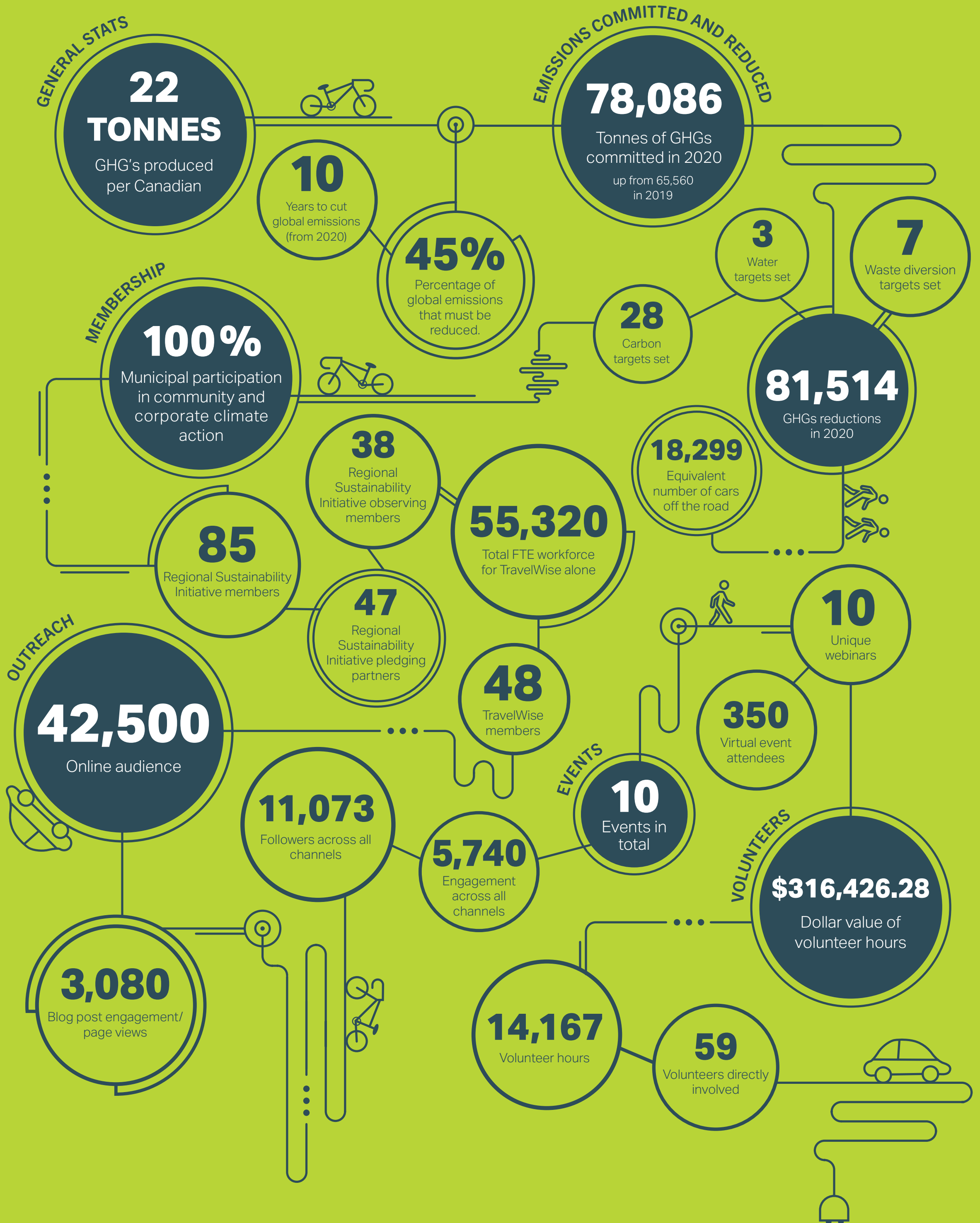
Our
Regional
Sustainability
Initiative shifted our third
milestone to include all the
UN Sustainable Development
Goals, going beyond
environmental
reporting.

We
hosted an
event with Future
Ancestors to talk about
race and sustainability in
Waterloo region specifically, to
help build the understanding
of how these issues
correlate.

The
ClimateActionWR
team joined a justice
research project from Wilfrid
Laurier University to strive
to design a transition to an
equitable, prosperous,
resilient, low carbon
future.

We
are at the
System’s Change
Champions table of
Wellbeing Waterloo Region to
help envision the full integration of
the changes we need for people
and the environment, and drive
forward community-level
systemic change.

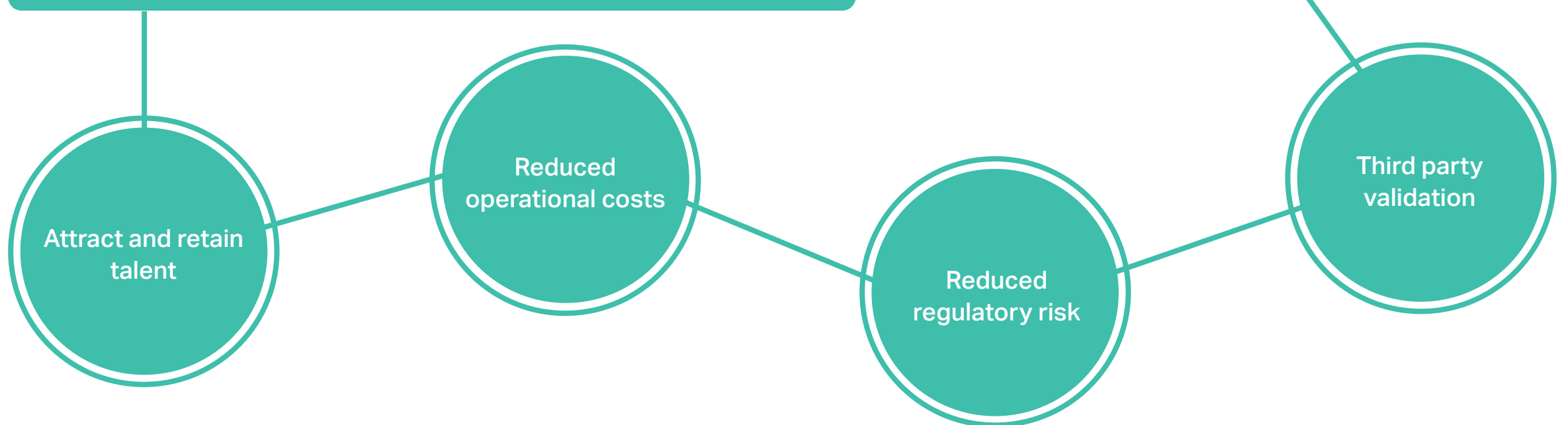
2020 impact stats



Make your business stronger

Sustainable Waterloo Region is a social enterprise non-profit that helps the local business community, and Waterloo Region as a whole, become more environmentally and economically sustainable, and therefore stronger. Join us in leading our community towards a more resilient and sustainable future!

A resilient business is a sustainable business



Make your business stronger



Set voluntary reduction targets in greenhouse gas emissions, water, or waste diversion and commit to sustainability. Get customized coaching, training and professional development, best practices, measurement tools and resources, while benefiting from our recognition program. Our milestones provide a customized approach to inspire action and support transformation in organizations of every size and industry.

To learn more contact us at busdev@sustainablewr.ca

Support your employees



Get access to best practices, exciting promotions, exclusive recognition, customized reporting and direct employee benefits. Employees will have access to discounted transit passes, carpool matching, employee engagement events, and emergency ride home reimbursement benefits.

To learn more contact us at travelwise@regionofwaterloo.ca

Community support programs



Get your organization plugged into the electric vehicle movement.

chargewr@sustainablewr.ca



Creating the plan for 80% GHG reduction by 2050. Offered in partnership with Reep Green Solutions.

connect@climateactionwr.ca



Taking a community approach to leading change with research, innovation and programming.

tova@sustainablewr.ca

Join our network today and enjoy the benefits of membership!



519-603-2223



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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

250 copies of the 2020 Report were printed using 77.11 kg of 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

It was also distributed digitally to reduce printed copies.

BY USING MORE SUSTAINABLE PAPER WE SAVED:

293.47 kg of GHG emissions | 7546.51 litres of water | 42.23 kg of solid waste | 381 kilowatt hours



Environmental impact estimates were made using the Environmental Paper Network Paper Calculator Version 4.0

AWARD WINNERS

Award	Winner
<p>Champion of the Year</p> <p>A single person who has been highly involved and supportive of sustainability with SWR and in their organization in 2020. Not specific to any one program and preferably to multiple programs/ projects.</p>	<div data-bbox="644 699 838 967">  </div> <p>Manuel Riemer (he/him)</p> <p>Manuel has worked with SWR in various ways, including our ClimateActionWR team, culture of sustainability project work, and the evolvGREEN collaborative working space. In his own work and as a partner of SWR, Manuel has worked towards climate justice and applied an equity lens to sustainability transformations and the cultural, behavioral, and personal well-being elements of the creation of a low carbon future through his work. This partnership has been a strong and thriving one for many years. Thank you so much Manuel!</p>
<p>SWR Partner of the Year</p> <p>An organization that went above and beyond in their support and participation in 2020. This organization is a key partner to SWR in the work we have done in one or many programs/projects.</p>	<div data-bbox="676 1149 825 1311">  </div> <p>Reep Green Solutions has been a partner of SWR's right from the start. In 2020, the partnership stepped it up a notch, working closely with the eight municipalities to develop our 80by50 Community Climate Action Strategy - TransformWR. This work has meant many hours of collaboration, sharing multiple sources of funding, co-managing a staff and volunteer team, and relying on one another for all day-to-day operations and strategic decision-making.</p> <p>The partnership is stronger than ever, and there is no other organization or team that we would have wanted to do this work and walk this journey towards an equitable, prosperous, resilient, low carbon future with.</p>
<p>Sustainability Breakthrough</p> <p>This award recognizes an organization that has overcome substantial barriers in their path to sustainability.</p>	<div data-bbox="644 1567 859 1619">  </div> <p>The University of Waterloo worked tirelessly to coordinate across faculties and departments to collect an impressive amount of operational data and establish their first public greenhouse gas emission reduction target. Congratulations to the University of Waterloo on this monumental breakthrough!</p>
<p>Rookie of the Year</p> <p>This award recognizes the most active and accomplished new member of the Regional Sustainability Initiative.</p>	<div data-bbox="651 1846 849 1928">  </div> <p>MTE has been a force to be reckoned with since joining the program in late 2019. Throughout 2020 we saw this organization mobilize an impressive green team that managed to maintain regular monthly meetings even throughout the pandemic. They have worked tirelessly preparing their greenhouse gas inventory and are getting ready to announce their first reduction target a little over a year after joining! Their dedication to prioritizing sustainability has been an inspiration to us all!</p>
<p>Net-Zero</p> <p>This award recognizes a member that has reduced and/or offset their entire greenhouse gas emission inventory and has successfully maintained a zero inventory for one or more reporting years.</p>	<div data-bbox="638 2163 866 2225">  </div> <p>VeriForm has maintained an absolute net-zero inventory for the last six reporting years, with 75% reduction in GHG emissions and only 25% of their emissions being offset in 2020 compared to 2006. VeriForm also goes above and beyond with reporting by including all Scope 3 emission sources, which are optional in our program framework. They continue to be an inspirational organization, not only in our membership but in our community!</p>
<p>Early Adopter</p> <p>This award recognizes a member that embraces innovation by prioritizing investments in leading sustainability initiatives and technologies to further their efforts towards achieving their sustainability targets.</p>	<div data-bbox="663 2501 834 2613">  </div> <p>AET has repeatedly demonstrated this by integrating of sustainability policies, retrofitting their office building for net-zero GHG operation, achieving B Corp Certification, and recently purchasing green natural gas. AET also donates 1% to reforestation efforts on degraded land through AET's 1% For the Trees Program. Congratulations AET!</p>

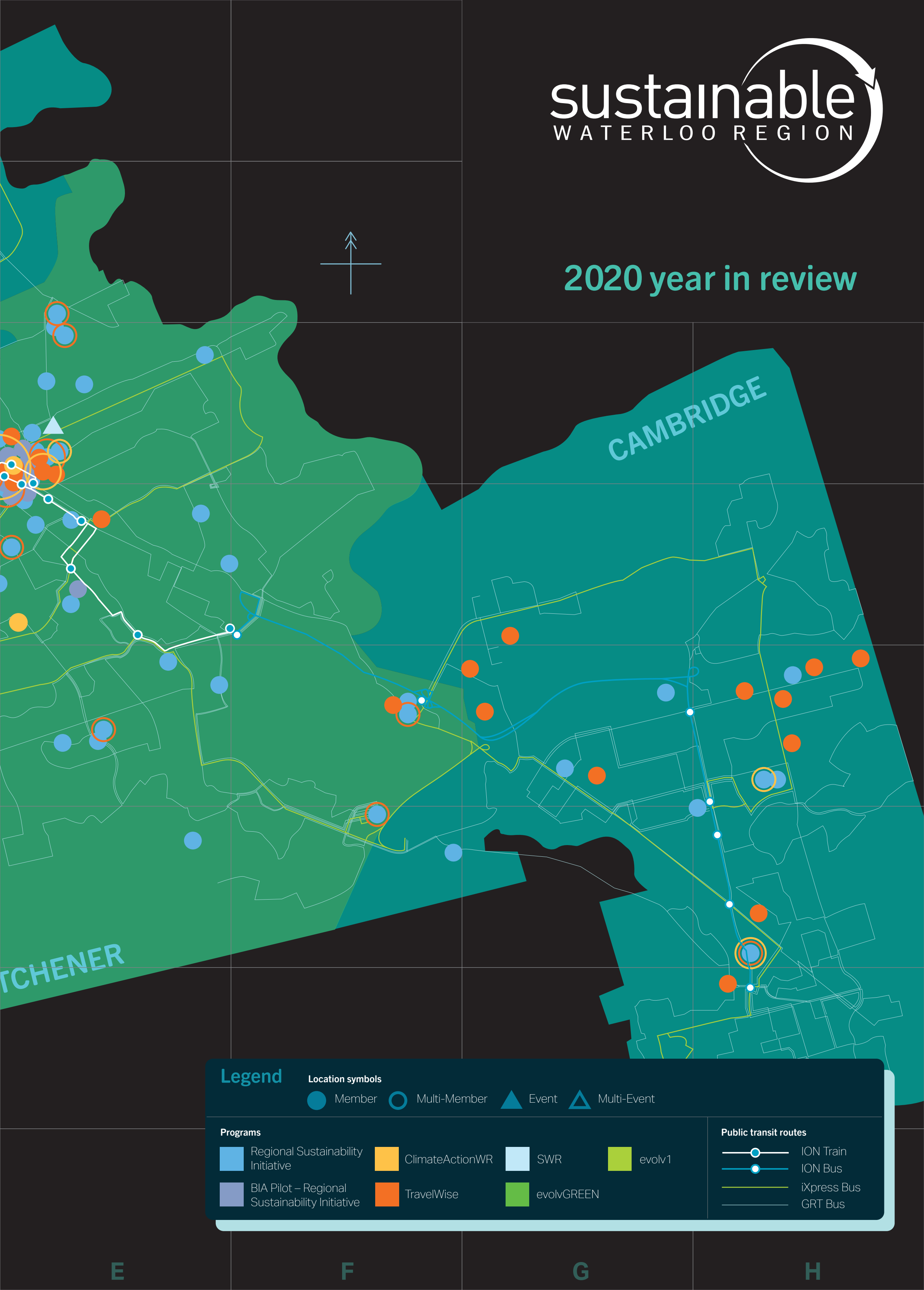
Our sustainable Waterloo region

We are so proud of all our members and partners that are working together to create our low carbon, prosperous future.

Thank you from the SWR Team



2020 year in review



Legend

Location symbols

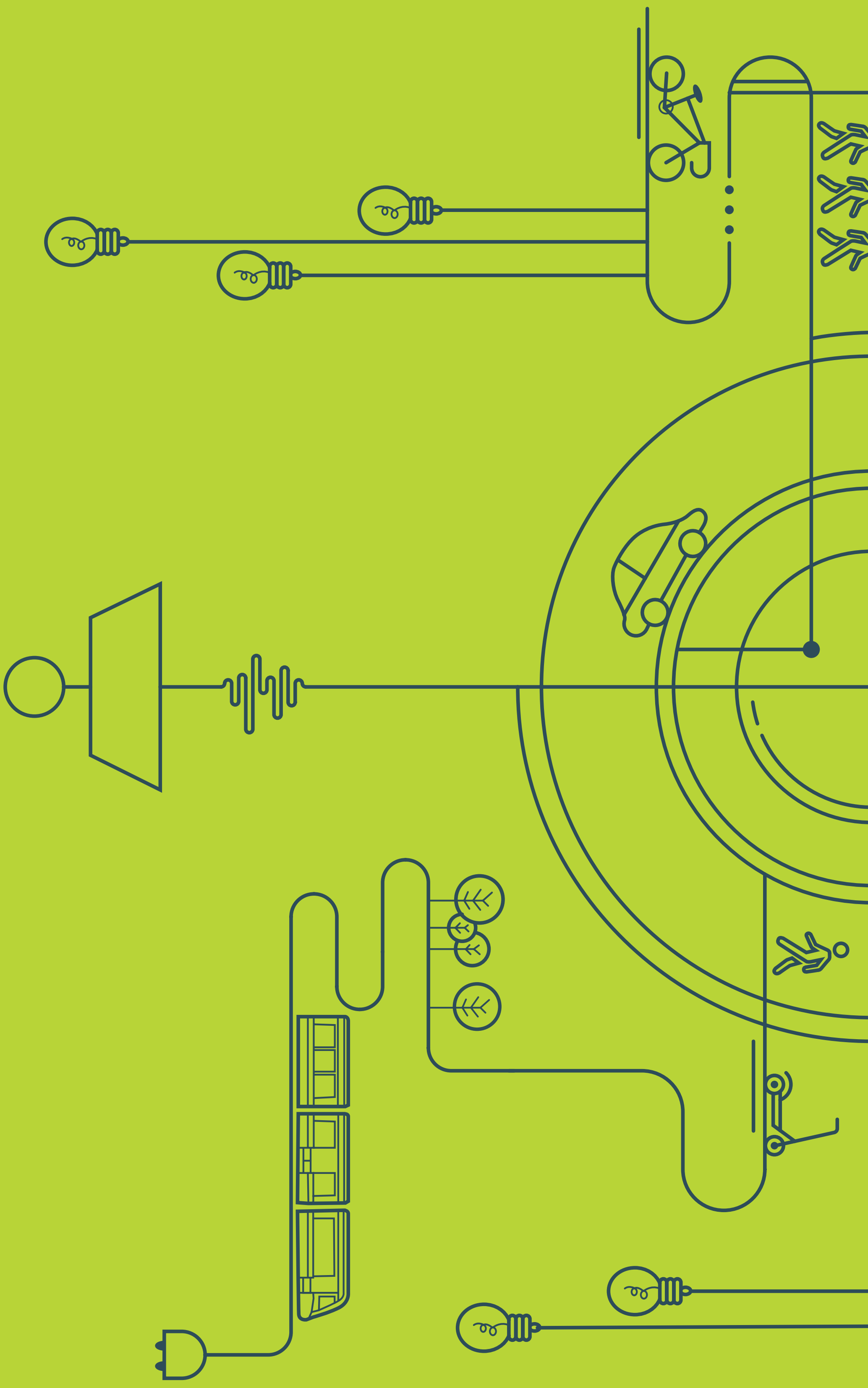
- Member ○ Multi-Member ▲ Event ▲ Multi-Event

Programs

- Regional Sustainability Initiative ClimateActionWR SWR evolv1
BIA Pilot – Regional Sustainability Initiative TravelWise evolvGREEN

Public transit routes

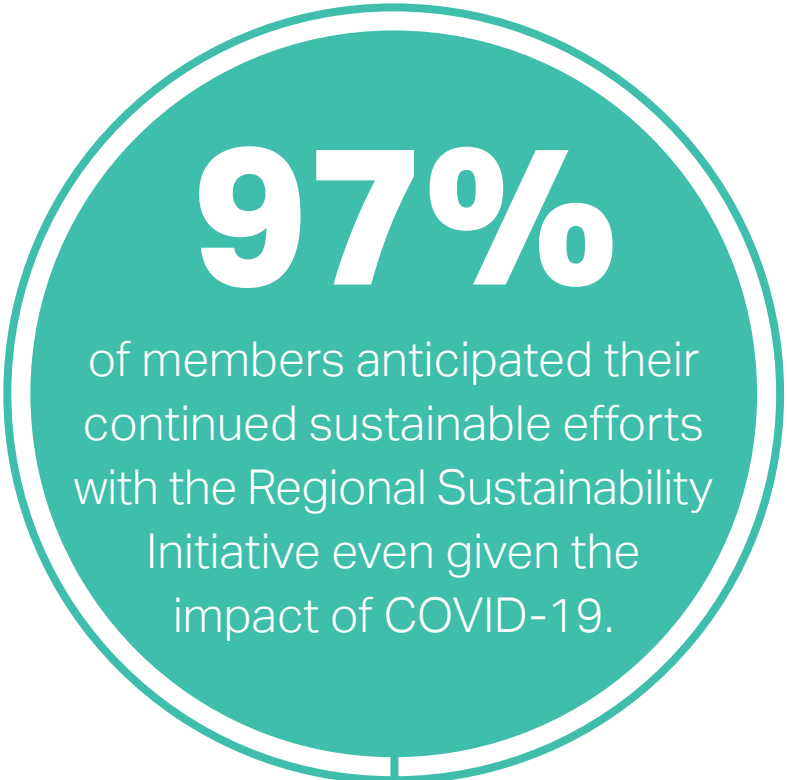
- ION Train
ION Bus
iXpress Bus
GRT Bus



Regional Sustainability Initiative

The Regional Sustainability Initiative supports organizations in Waterloo Region committed to improving the environmental sustainability of their operations. Every organization’s sustainability journey is different; our milestones provide a customized approach to inspire action and support transformation in members of varying size and industry. We help our members understand their impact while setting voluntary reduction targets in greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water impacts, as well as increasing waste diversion.

Our network includes over 85 members, of which, our Pledging Partners have committed to reducing 81,514 tonnes of GHG emissions over the next 10 years.



How the pandemic is shaping how we support sustainability in our region’s businesses

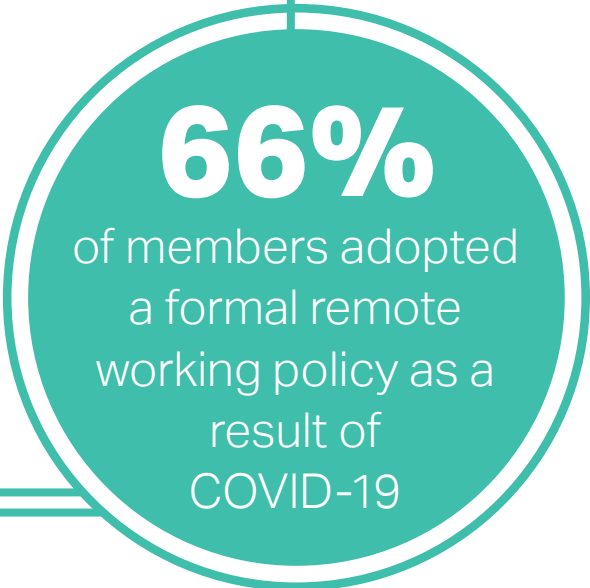
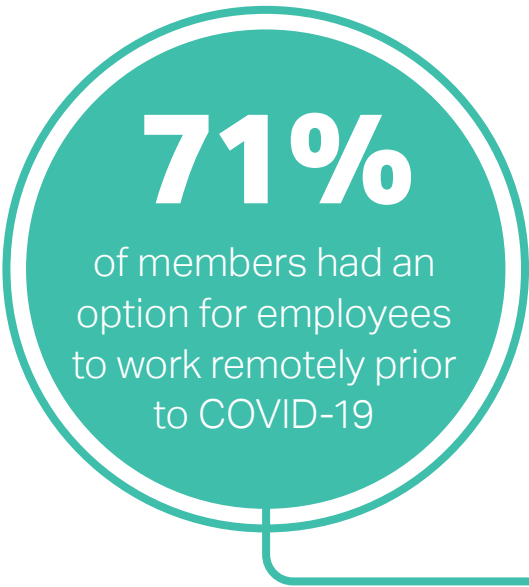
2020 brought unprecedented challenges to our network, but it also highlighted our ability to adapt and work together as a community, both locally and globally.

As a country, Canada saw emissions drop by an estimated 7% in April, however, with an expected strong rebound in 2021, given that the majority of these reductions stem from pandemic adaptations and not intentional improvements to the environmental sustainability of operations. According to our Year-End Survey, over 50% of our responding members closed or partially closed their office buildings in 2020, with most of their employees working remotely. With unique conditions for every member, office closures varied from 2 to 8+ months with a gradual reopening of essential services. Other members were forced to adapt operations significantly and even lay off employees.

The shifting footprint due to Covid: From commercial to residential

COVID-19 impacted our members' sustainability data often reflected as reductions in emissions, waste, and/or water from 2019 to 2020. Most member’s operations continue to generate emissions, waste, and water impacts, but these source activities are outside of the scopes of our program’s target framework because they occur in residential homes of employees instead of facilities we usually report on. Using data collected in early April 2020, the Nature Climate Change journal confirmed this by analyzing daily CO² emissions across 69 countries and found that emissions from industrial sectors declined by around 35%, while emissions from residential buildings increased by 5% compared to 2019's daily emission data. The pandemic also created disruptions to member’s data collection processes resulting in only 76% of Pledging Partners submitting their sustainability data this reporting period.

With this in mind, it is difficult to determine which emission reductions resulted from situational factors due to COVID-19 restrictions or sustainable practice. For these reasons, targets achieved in 2020 alone will not be recognized as a target reached-unless the reductions are maintained in a pre-or post-pandemic year. It’s important to recognize, however, the continued commitment to sustainability demonstrated by our members. Their work builds their organizational resilience and a sustainable future for our community and beyond, and we could not be more proud of all they accomplished in 2020.



Sustainable Development Goal Progress Tracking





The Sustainable Development Goal Action Manager (SDG AM) which launched as a new program innovation in 2020, is offered to Milestone 3 - Reporting members in partnership with B-Lab. This tool allows organizations to internally assess their operations against the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a collection of 17 interconnected goals that act as a blueprint for bettering people and the planet by 2030 in the “decade of action”. The SDG AM is designed to help organizations set goals and track progress toward the 17 SDGs, through 17 questionnaire modules.

Core Modules: The Regional Sustainability Initiative has identified goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13 as strongly aligned with SWR's work and focus on climate mitigation and encourages members to prioritize completion of these modules and track progress towards them on an ongoing basis.

Optional Modules: All other goals a member organization is tracking operational performance against using the SDG AM. We are excited to be bringing an integrated and more holistic approach to sustainability to our network.



SDG Reporting Members

Member	Core Modules Completed	Optional Modules Completed
		<div>1 NO POVERTY</div> <div>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</div> <div>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</div> <div>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</div>
	<div>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</div> <div>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</div> <div>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</div> <div>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</div> <div>13 CLIMATE ACTION</div>	<div>1 NO POVERTY</div> <div>2 ZERO HUNGER</div> <div>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</div> <div>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</div> <div>5 GENDER EQUALITY</div> <div>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</div> <div>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</div> <div>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</div> <div>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</div> <div>15 LIFE ON LAND</div> <div>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</div>
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Members

The Regional Sustainability Initiative organizes membership into a 4 Milestone framework:
1) Observing; 2) Capacity Building; 3) Reporting and; 4) Pledging (target setting).

Pledging



Reporting

In partnership with B Lab, these members are reporting on their efforts to integrate sustainability into their corporate operations, policies, and practices. This assessment enables organizations to measure, compare and further integrate sustainability into their business.



Capacity Building

These organizations are building their internal capacity and developing an integrated action plan.



Observing

These organizations are starting their sustainability journey which includes understanding their environmental impact and building their internal capacity.



Building back better in 2020

Many of our members were inspired to improve sustainability practices in their operations and 'build back better'. This is true of the program's newest members, **Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre and HIP Developments**, who joined in the middle of the pandemic; and especially true of **The Waterloo Region District School Board, City of Kitchener**, and **the University of Waterloo**, which set new sustainability targets in 2020.

How the program evolved

Throughout 2020, the Regional Sustainability Initiative continued to provide members with resources and support along their sustainability journey, with modifications to ensure remote-by-default delivery. Offerings such as waste assessments, energy assessments, and the Downtown Kitchener BIA waste diversion pilot had to be suspended indefinitely, until we can reevaluate safe and effective delivery of them. Member-exclusive events became online webinars. Member employee engagement campaigns such as the annual Carbon Cleanse were adapted to a hybrid model allowing for challenges to be completed at home or in a facility.

The program introduced new functionality to its member collaboration site, MemberLink, including a video library for on-demand event recordings, member-to-member discussion forums, and a new online delivery of "The Idea Book". In November 2020, the program also saw the retirement of E-Score, as we introduced Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Progress Tracking for our members in its place. As 2020 marks the beginning of the decade of action, SDG Progress Tracking will be a valuable way for our members to track their businesses' performance against the goals.

Our team's ability to adapt program delivery for pandemic working conditions wouldn't have been possible without our volunteers' dedication. The Idea Book is an incredible 100+ page PDF resource maintained by volunteer Living Documents Coordinators, **Patricia** and **Nick**, which now resides in a searchable online format on MemberLink. A special thanks also goes to our Data Management volunteers **Amira Musa** and **Manpreet Dhaliwal** for keeping our members informed and engaged through their work on our member specific reports and the leaderboard. **Tasha-Leigh Gauthier** has volunteered with the program for over 10 years and was critical to our ability to respond to the impacts of the pandemic on our sustainability reporting and target-setting methodologies.

Sustainability is always a priority

Read on to learn how our members continued to prioritize sustainability, even amidst a global pandemic



AET Group partnered with Blue Water Energy for a solar array project that included the installation of a 15.45 kWh roof-mounted and wall awning solar photovoltaic system, a Tesla Powerwall, and an EV charging station powered by solar energy, which supports their fleet of hybrid plug-in vehicles. The system generated 13,040 kWh of energy, making the office a net energy positive building and reduced their carbon emissions by 11,227lbs — equivalent to planting 152.5 trees!



City of Kitchener promoted environmental awareness amongst employees through social media campaigns and their engagement programs that included direct engagement with their fleet users regarding sustainable driving and anti-idling techniques, support for reducing plastic use and energy use at home. Employees participated in the annual Waste Reduction Week in Canada, and the City hosted an eco-friendly prize raffle for Earth Day in partnership with Reep Green Solutions.



Diva International continued to offer sustainable education for employees through their #EcoDivas Slack channel where they shared weekly sustainability tips and webinars. Employees participated in ongoing eco-challenges, such as our program's Carbon Cleanse and Plastic Free July, while they also took action by planting seedling kits in support of the bee population and holding waste management initiatives in November.



Enviro-Stewards partnered with Project Neutral to host a green impact contest that rewarded the employee with the lowest environmental impact and the employee who reduced their environmental impact the most with grand prizes.



MTE Consultants participated in the Carbon Cleanse competition this year and made plans to implement an organics collection upon return to their office. Along with this, they considered other initiatives, such as EVs and property improvements for their facility, and hope to formalize a targeted reduction plan in the future as they began tracking their carbon emissions.



The University of Waterloo retained WalterFedy to conduct a campus-wide energy audit of all University buildings covering more than 7 million square feet of audited space. Their engineering team developed utility use profiles for all campus buildings, conducted a benchmarking exercise, and identified energy conservation measures for each facility. This project identified over 900 energy savings opportunities, which will be prioritized and scheduled for implementation toward their Shift: Neutral climate action plan's 2025 carbon target.



Toyota Boshoku Canada Inc. undertook a large electrical sub-metering project that allowed them to determine the amount of electricity used in their facility and the exact locations of usage. This project has highlighted their key areas of impact and has provided the structure for the future on how they can achieve the largest energy reductions in a short amount of time.



Township of Wellesley increased tree cover within the Township through the Planting Roots program with support from the Grand River Conservation authority. 600 trees were available for residential pick up each day for a week to reduce the Township's overall carbon footprint.



Township of Wilmot implemented an organic collection at their Administration Building with centralized waste areas on each floor rather than garbage cans at each desk, reducing their waste generation.



Township of Woolwich performed an extensive renovation of their 100-year-old facility, Conestogo Operations Garage, that entailed a new exterior cladding, Energy Star certified door and window replacements, new overhead doors, and insulating the entire facility. Retrofitting aging infrastructure anticipates significant reductions in GHG emissions and their natural gas consumption for heating purposes.



WalterFedy Inc. got technical by using their in-house commuter tracker to share detailed graphs with their staff, showing positive impacts of reduced commuting this year. This data helped them develop recommendations for a Work from Home policy, which will allow their firm to maintain this positive impact, even after pandemic times.



Waterloo Catholic District School Board installed various building upgrades on new boilers, roofs, heat pumps, controls, doors, and windows and encouraged schools to proceed with their sustainability practices. Before the pandemic, 19 schools worked towards an EcoSchools certification, and 87% of their schools participated in an organic waste diversion program.



Waterloo North Hydro switched to 100% recycled paper towels and changed their dispensers' style to reduce waste production in the office. They also continued their annual Eco-challenge in a working from home format, including fun events such as meatless Mondays, green thumb challenges, and 10-minute makeovers.



Waterloo Region District School Board installed natural gas-fired heat pumps at Forest Hill PS. Heat pumps are more efficient than furnaces and emit lower levels of harmful byproducts like carbon dioxide which reduced their energy consumption and GHG emissions.



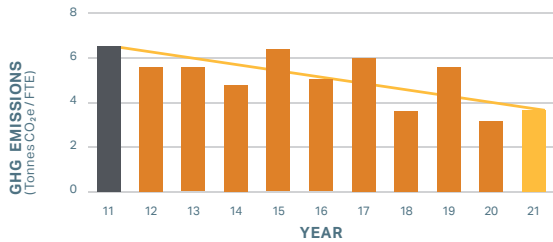
Wilfrid Laurier University launched a Carbon Reduction Roadmap for their campuses that sets their long-term goals over the next few decades. The document maps out the projects and actions required to achieve Laurier's GHG reduction targets of 15% by 2022, 40% by 2030, and net-zero campuses by 2050, respectively.

Pledging Partners Progress Towards Sustainability Targets

Three Targets



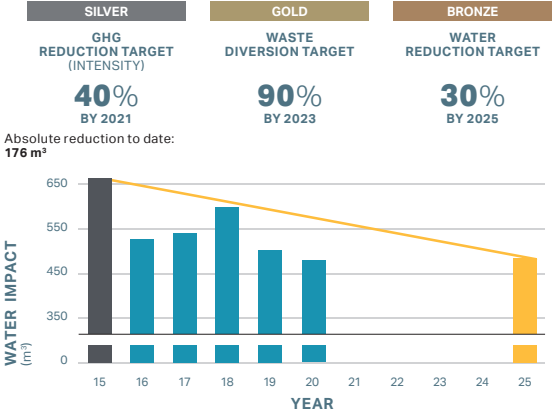
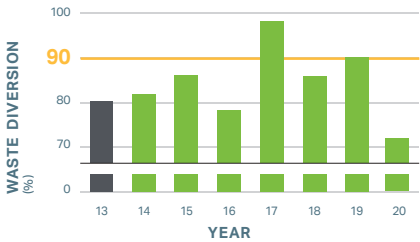
Absolute reduction to date:
-24 TONNES CO₂e



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

Air, Employee Commuting, Vehicle Business Travel, Waste

Current diversion:
72%

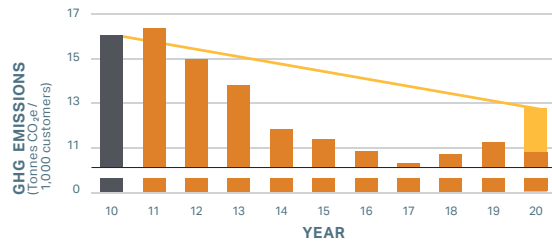


WATER FOCUS AREAS

Tap Water, Wastewater, Stormwater



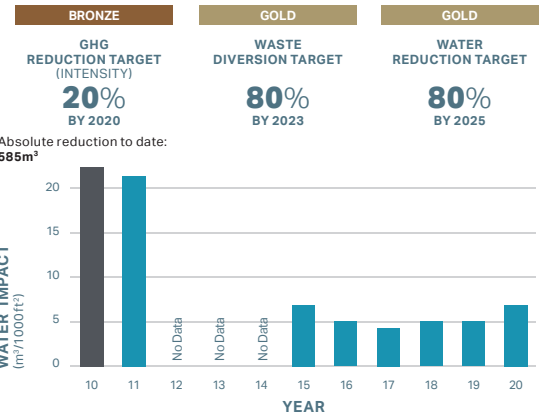
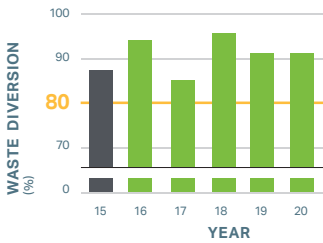
Absolute reduction to date:
194 TONNES CO₂e



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

N/A

Current diversion:
91%



WATER FOCUS AREAS

Tap Water

Absolute Targets vs. Intensity-Based Targets

Our GHG Pledging Partners commit to reducing their environmental impact by setting either absolute or intensity-based reduction targets:

Absolute targets aim to reduce an organization's total emissions or water impacted by a targeted amount.

Intensity-based targets aim to reduce emissions or water impacted relative to a particular organization's operational growth factor or performance indicator. Intensity metric values could include reductions per: square meters of office space, full-time employees, or products produced.

Waste Diversion targets are not absolute or intensity-based, and this does not apply to them.

Reading the graphs

Our Pledging Partners have either met or exceeded their target when:

GHGs

Bar is below target line

WASTE

Bar is above target line

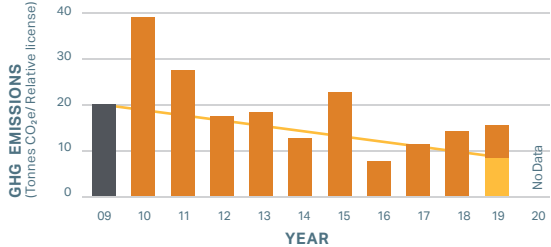
WATER

Bar is below target line

Two Targets

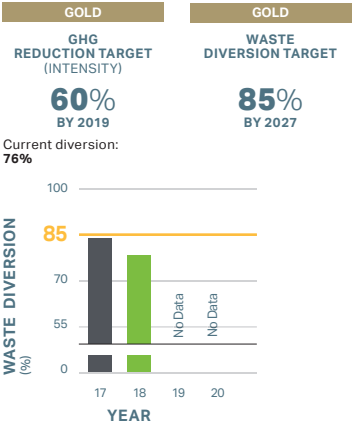


Absolute reduction to date:
-144 TONNES CO₂e

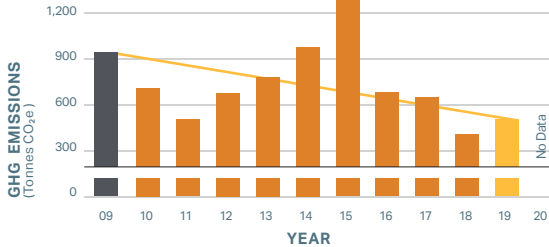


OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

Air, Employee Commuting, Vehicle Business Travel, Waste

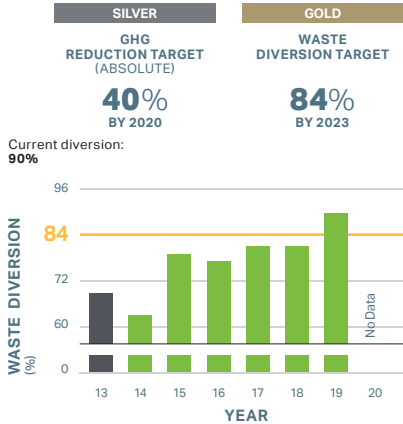


Absolute reduction to date:
440 TONNES CO₂e

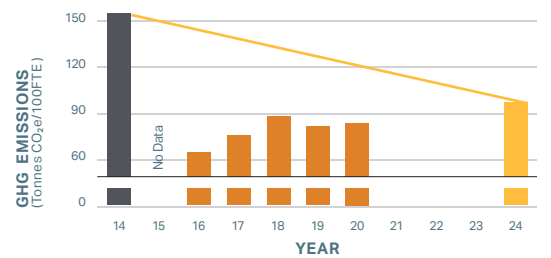


OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

Waste, Water



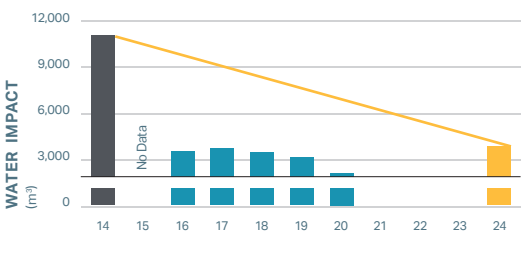
Absolute reduction to date:
172 TONNES CO₂e



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

Water

Absolute reduction to date:
8,548 m³

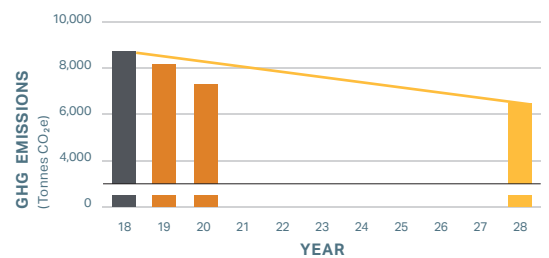


WATER FOCUS AREAS

Tap Water, Wastewater, Stormwater

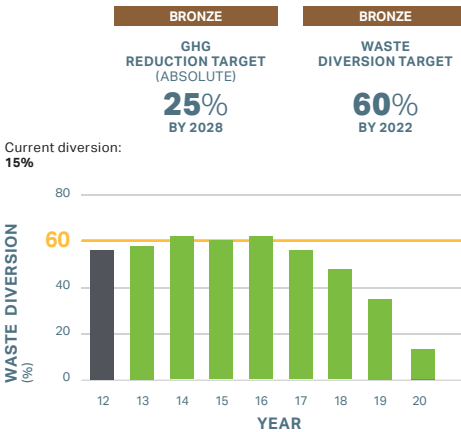


Absolute reduction to date:
1000 TONNES CO₂e



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES

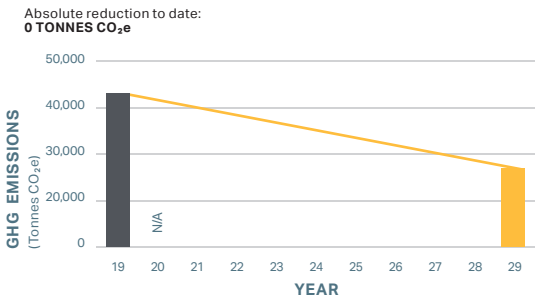
Air, Vehicle Business Travel, Waste, Water



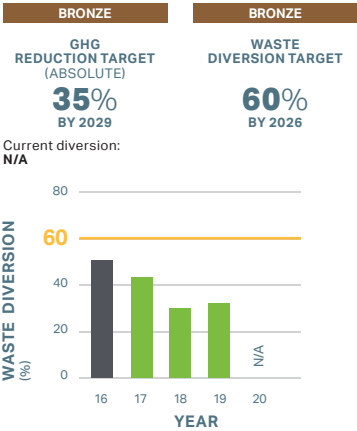
* 2% of 2019 emissions are estimated



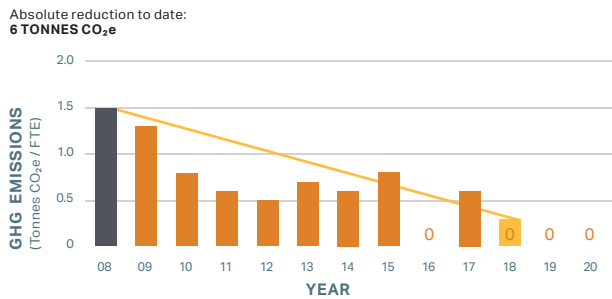
Two Target Cont'd



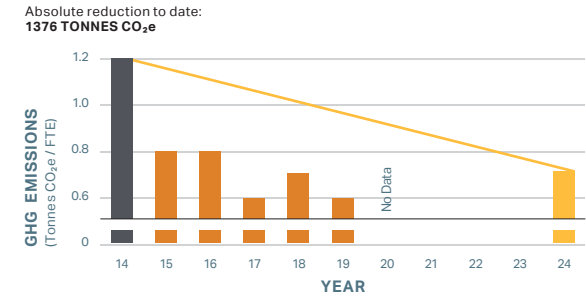
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A



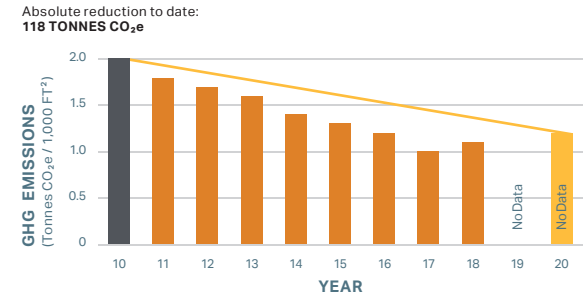
One Target



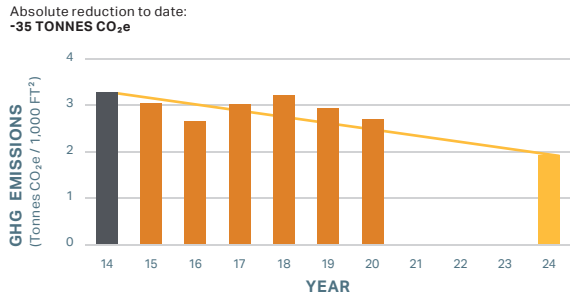
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
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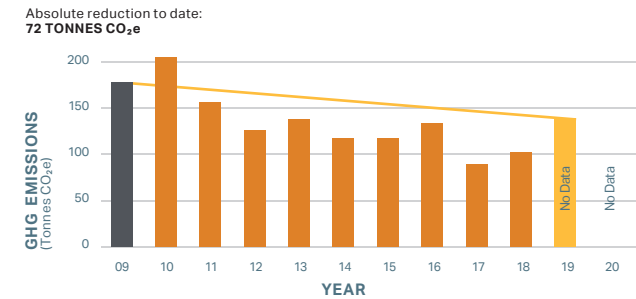
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A



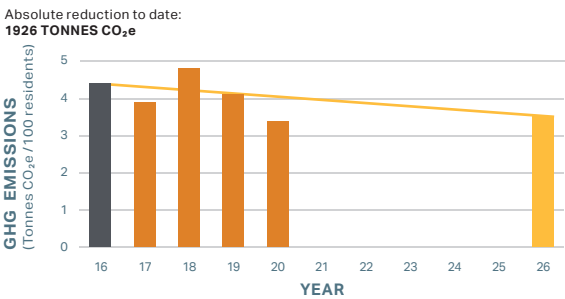
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Water



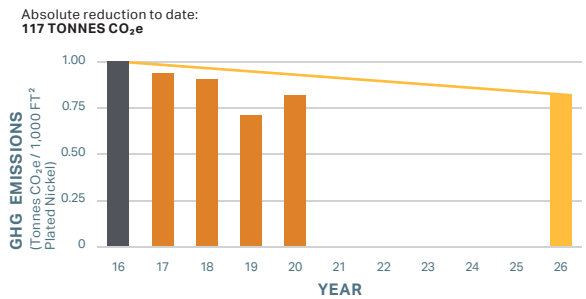
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Water



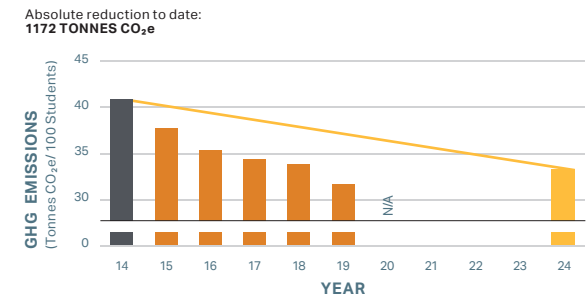
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Air, Waste, Water



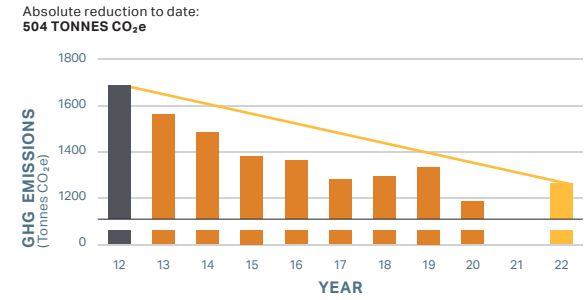
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N/A



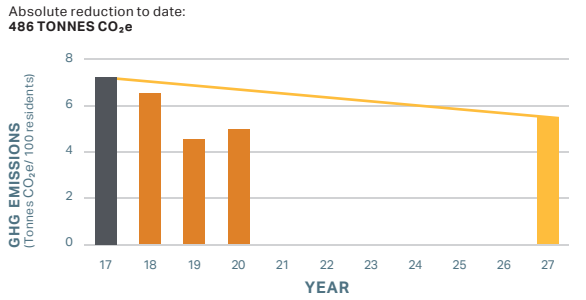
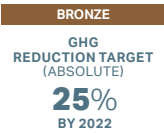
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Waste, Water



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A



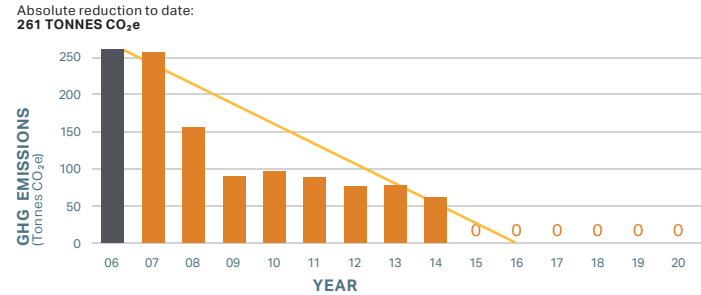
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A



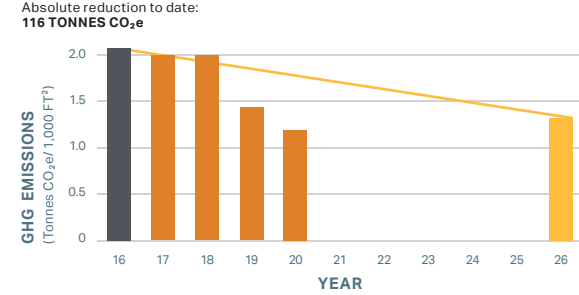
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Water



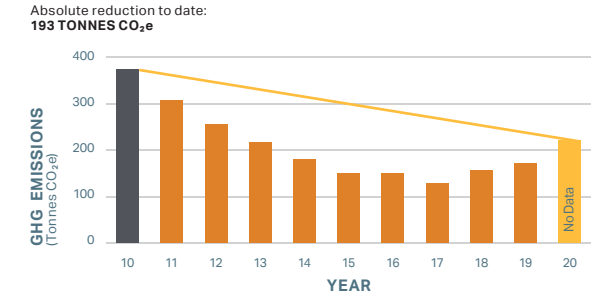
AS OF DECEMBER 31ST, 2020



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Air, Employee Commuting, Vehicle Business Travel, Waste, Water

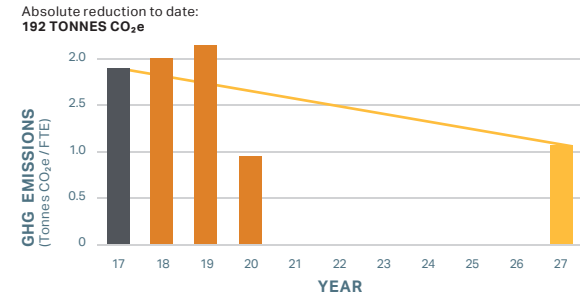


OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A

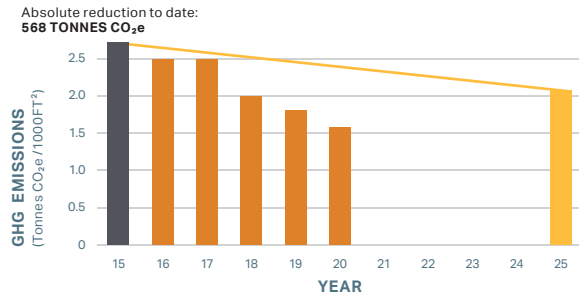


OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Air, Waste, Water

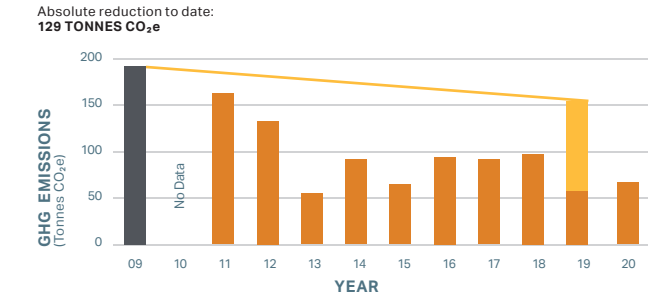
* <1% of 2019 emissions are estimated



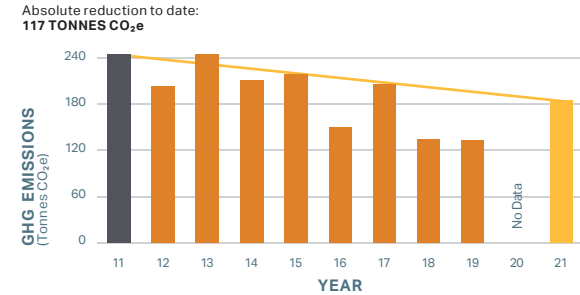
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Vehicle Business Travel



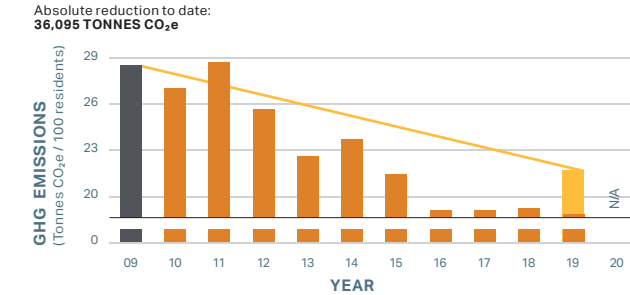
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Waste, Water



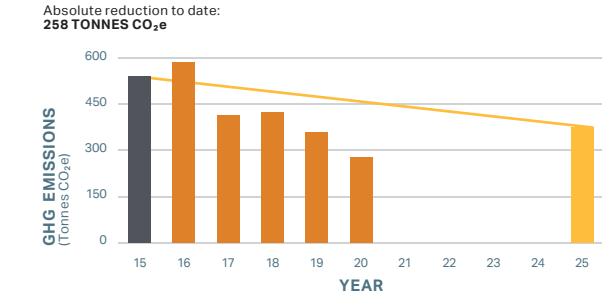
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Vehicle Business Travel, Water



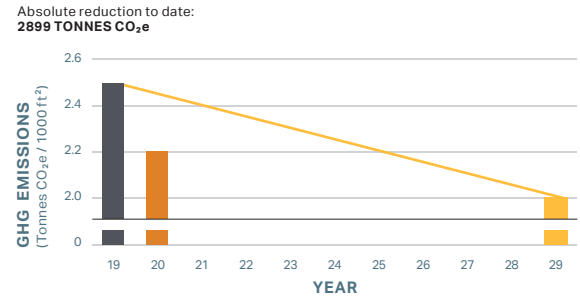
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Air, Waste, Water



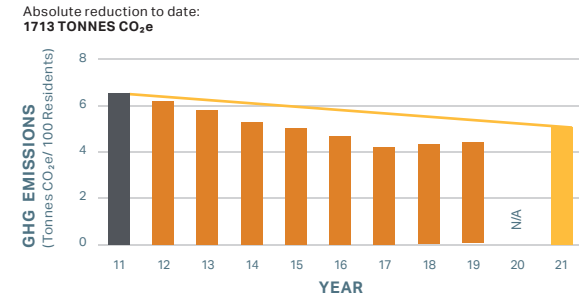
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Vehicle Business Travel



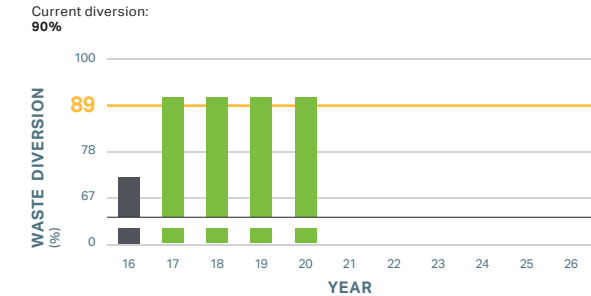
OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Water



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Vehicle Business Travel



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
Air, Vehicle Business Travel



OPTIONAL SCOPE 3 SOURCES
N/A

2020 Carbon Cleanse Highlights

Ready, Set, Reduce!

Every year, we host Carbon Cleanse, a friendly competition that challenges employees from our member organizations to reduce their environmental impact while testing their knowledge about sustainability in their daily lives. Carbon Cleanse is usually a month long competition with this year's themes including energy, waste, and water. Due to the pandemic, many employees were working from home so challenges became in-home involving pets and the whole family! 2020's challenge brought together 9 participating member organizations who went above and beyond with their creative approach to the weekly challenges. We loved seeing their unique social media mascots and the growing culture of sustainability that continues to drive our community. Thank you to all that participated!



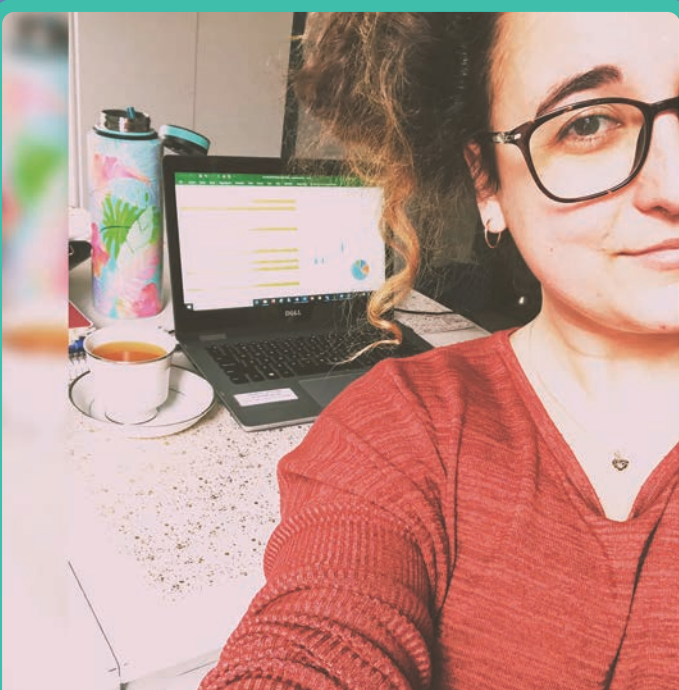
Gowling WLG charged into Energy Week with their "Gowling WLG Battery" mascot to remind others of the importance of safe electronic disposal and turned down their thermostats to reduce their energy consumption!



Quarry tracked their work waste in a jar for Waste Week and took part in a sports-themed Dress Down Friday to take less time getting ready in the morning and, in turn, conserve energy, water, and waste (featuring their pets!).



MTE Consultants "stopped the drop" during Water Week by checking their taps at home for leaks and making meatless meals to save on water. Their green hard hat mascot, Vern appeared in almost all their posts!



Conestoga College showed their working-from-home setups that featured desk plants, reusable water bottles, and their cool pineapple mascot!

2020 Carbon Cleanse Winners

1st Place

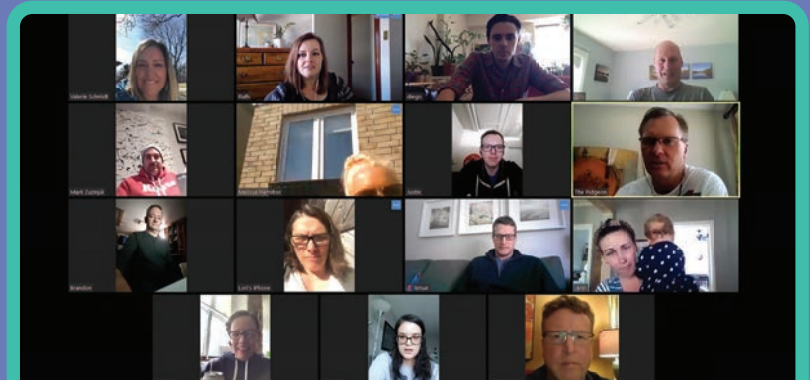
QUARRY

2nd Place

DIVA
INTERNATIONAL INC.

3rd Place

aet MTE



GSP Group dressed down and stayed connected over Zoom to celebrate Earth Hour! Some took the meeting outdoors, while others took advantage of natural lighting to reduce their energy usage.



Sustainability Programs



The Regional Sustainability Initiative supports organizations in Waterloo Region committed to improving the environmental sustainability of their operations. Every organization's sustainability journey is different; our milestones provide a customized approach to inspire action and support transformation in members of varying size and industry. We help our members understand their impact while setting voluntary reduction targets in greenhouse gas emissions, waste and water impacts, as well as increasing waste diversion.



ClimateActionWR is a collaboration between local organizations and community members focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Led by Reep Green Solutions and Sustainable Waterloo Region, this program coordinates the activities of the Climate Action Plan. It establishes cross-sector dialogue, facilitates collaborative opportunities, and monitors and measures progress toward the achievement of our community's GHG emission reduction target of 6% below 2010 levels by 2020. With the new goal of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050, we are transitioning towards implementing a long-term plan for a low carbon future.



The Cora Group's evolv1 is Canada's first net-positive energy, zero carbon commercial office building. Nestled within the David Johnston Research + Technology Park, this building was envisioned in 2014 by Sustainable Waterloo Region, The Cora Group, the David Johnston Research + Technology Park, and anchor tenant, EY Canada. Completed in the fall of 2018, evolv1 demonstrates the viability of building design that contributes to environmental well-being and the clean economy.



evolvGREEN is the region's foremost collaborative workspace for entrepreneurs, researchers, and clean economy supporters. Located within evolv1, it is a partnership between the Accelerator Centre, Sustainable Waterloo Region, the University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University. At the forefront of systems transformation, we offer pioneering sustainability programs, cutting-edge research, and the commercialization of innovations that drive the clean economy.



TravelWise provides sustainable commuting solutions to employees in Waterloo region with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles traveling on our roads. In addition to offering discounted Grand River Transit (GRT) passes and an Emergency Ride Home reimbursement program to employees, TravelWise provides an online carpool matching tool, fun promotional events, and customized commuting reports to member organizations.



ChargeWR collaborates with organizations in Waterloo region to plan and implement activities that increase the number of electric vehicles (EVs) and charging stations in the region. Having already surpassed our goal of achieving 1000 EVs on the road by 2020 in 2018, the program continues to promote the expansion of the region's charging network as well as showcase the growing number of EV model options to generate interest and support for zero-emissions driving.



ClimateActionWR

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2020 Highlights

Development of community climate action strategy

2020 brought significant progress in the development of Waterloo region's long-term Community Climate Action Strategy. Titled TransformWR, the strategy outlines our community's pathway to achieving an 80% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2050, and our transition to an equitable, prosperous, resilient, low carbon community.

Some of the work completed this year:

Community engagement initiative

Completed: January 2020

From June 2019 to January 2020, we heard from more than 1,600 community members across the region. Through events, workshops, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, we heard from members of our community about what they wanted the low-carbon future of Waterloo region to look like, and their insights on how we can get there.

Expert/subject-matter expert engagement initiatives

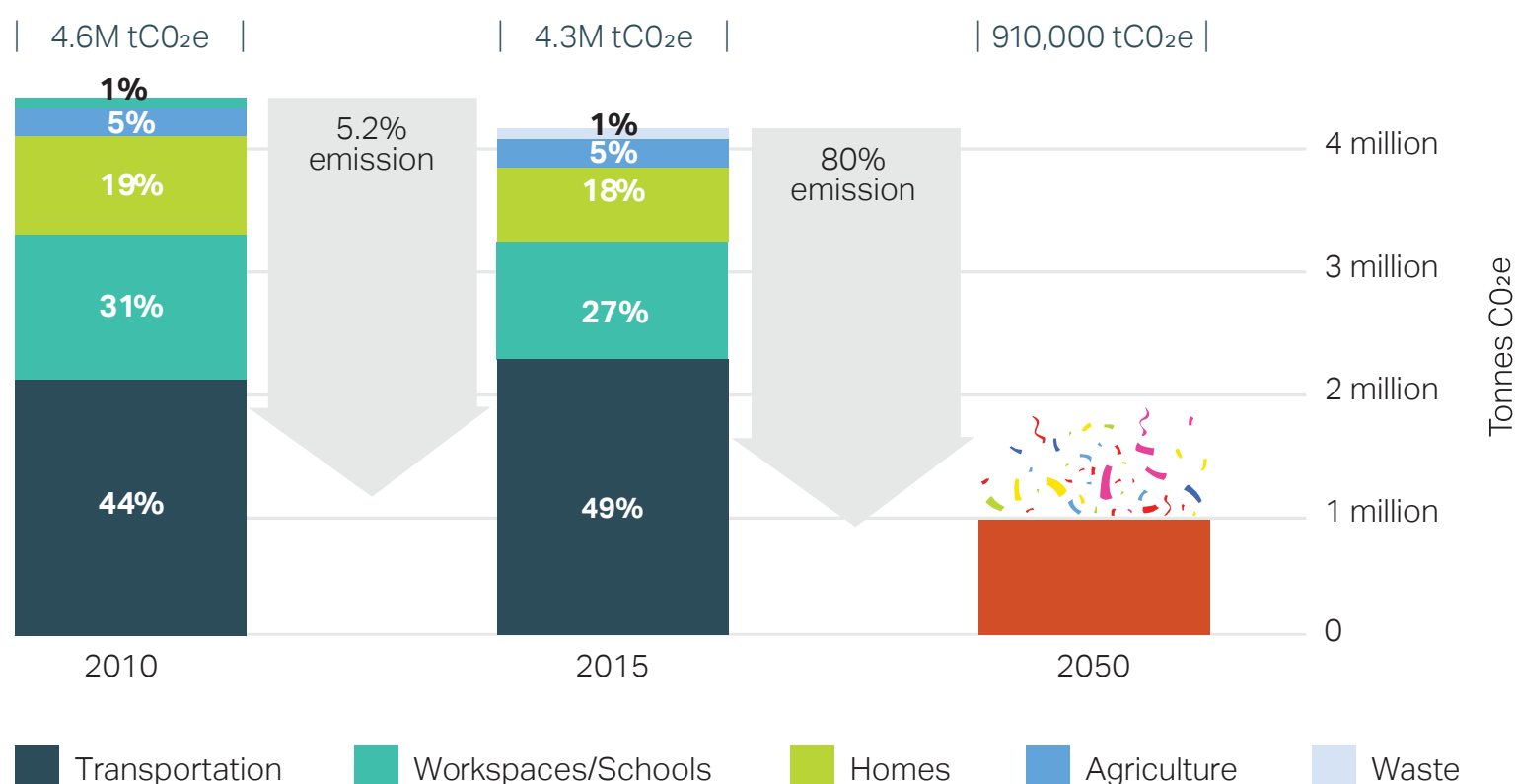
Completed: January – June 2020

Through workshops, surveys, and conversations with more than 100 technical experts, locally, nationally, and internationally, we learned about the existing and emerging solutions and technologies that could be leveraged to achieve our 80by50 goal and vision for 2050.

Based on both the community and technical data and insights, followed by cross-sector collaboration, the pathway to guide our transition to an equitable, prosperous, and resilient low carbon community was developed. This laid the framework for our long-term strategy to achieve our 80by50 target, and the short-term action items used to inform the 10-year plan.

The draft climate action strategy will be presented for final public review and comment in early 2021, and finalized and presented to all eight regional municipality councils in mid-2021.

80 x 50 Goal



This work is made possible by the generous support from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Transition 2050 grant and the ongoing support of all eight regional municipalities (Region of Waterloo, the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, and the townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich).



What our community shared about their vision for: The future for Waterloo Region in 2050

Through extensive community engagement initiatives executed in partnership with local agency Unless Design Partners, we asked community members what they envisioned the year 2050 to look like in Waterloo Region if we were to achieve our climate action targets.

From perspectives and ideas about day-to-day life and the systems surrounding the values and stories that act as a foundation for these structures, several key themes emerged which informed the development of the long-term community Climate Action Strategy (which will be released in Spring 2021).

Thinking in layers and time horizons

Insights were organized into four layers of analysis:

Lifestyle: How people describe the situation. How it shows up in their day-to-day lives. The timescale of change is continuous and initiated, and led by citizens and governments.

Systemic: The structures, systems, policies, and relationships that underpin day-to-day life. Change takes place over the years and is initiated and led by partnerships, networks, and collaborations.

Worldview: The culture, values, and philosophical frameworks that frame our systems. Change takes place over decades and is initiated and led by people and voluntary associations.

Myth/Metaphor: The archetypes, stories, and gut-level responses that shape our worldview. Change takes place over generations and is initiated and led by leaders and artists.

Learn more about what's behind these high-level themes, and how our community described the opportunities, obstacles, and challenges that exist today and the approaches and action that will facilitate the transition to the future.

Read the full-length Community Engagement Summary Report developed by Unless Design Partners at climateactionwr.ca

We asked:

Imagine it's 2050 — 30 years into the future. We have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions in Waterloo region by 80%! What does Waterloo Region look like in the future?

We heard:

Our lifestyle will have changed:

- There will be evidence of the efficient design of space and resources.
- The divides between built and natural infrastructure are dissolving.
- Conceptions of health and wellbeing have expanded beyond local and individual.
- Flourishing person-to-person relationships stoke a strong sense of community.

Our systems will have changed:

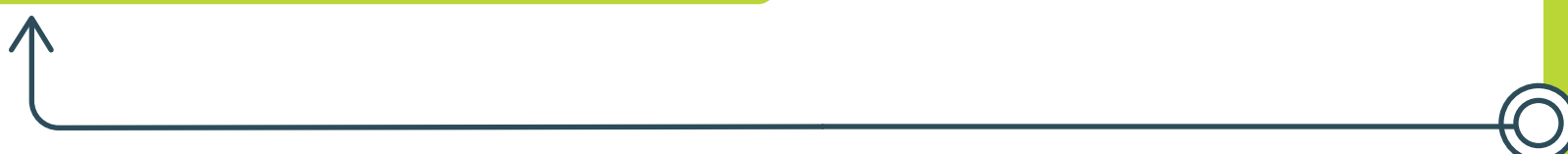
- Systems, structures, and policies are responsive to emergent needs.
- We have tools and technology that facilitate living fully in new ways.
- Our systems tilt toward sharing, collaboration, and co-dependence.
- We've intentionally optimized for different outcomes.

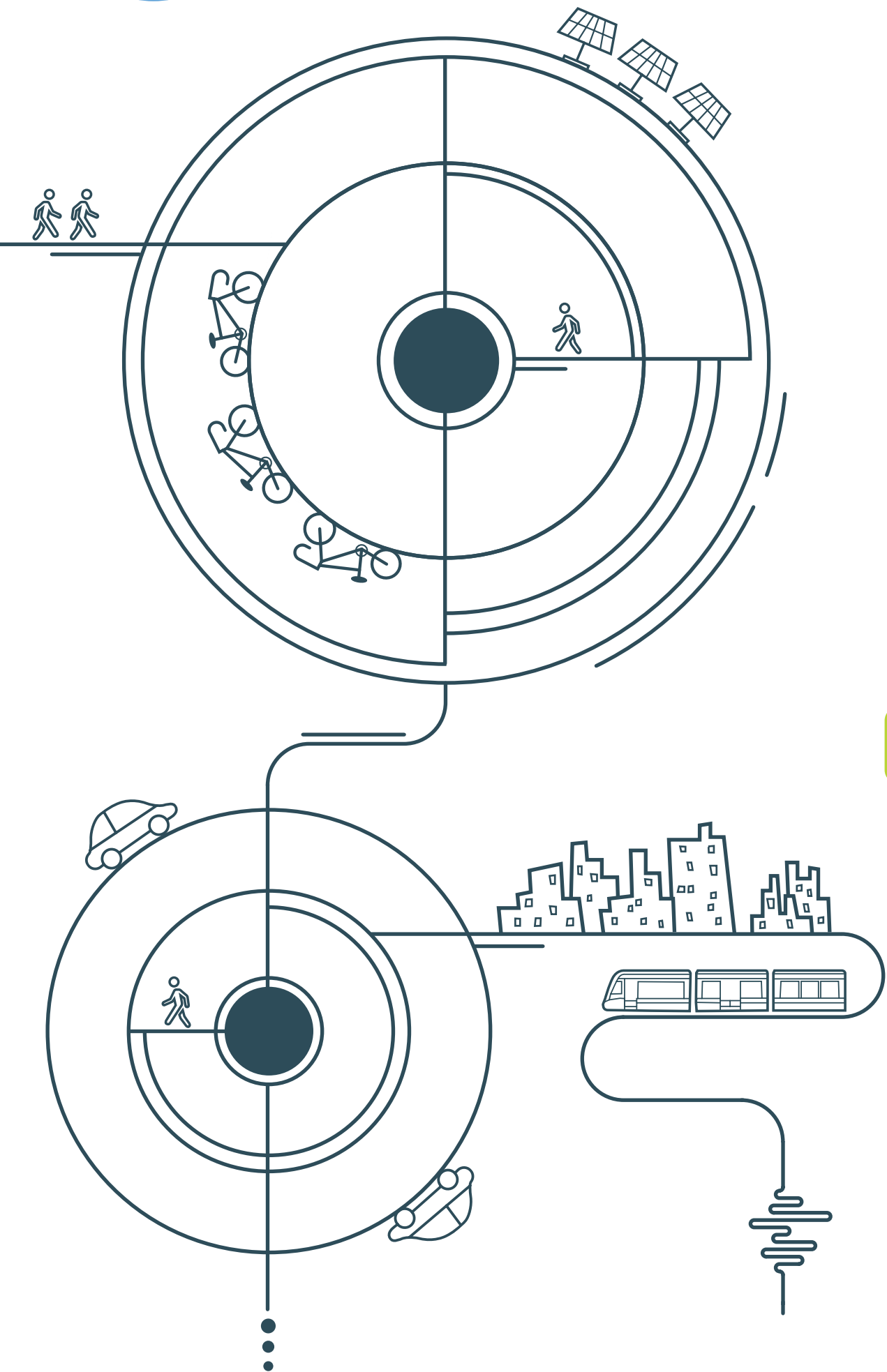
Our worldview will have changed:

- We value the collective, beyond its utility to us.
- We value interdependence and reciprocity.

The stories we'll tell of 2050:

- We're active players, inseparable from the ecology we're in.
- Community as a remedy. Individualism as a malady.
- We live in a world of plenty.
- Our culture of innovation around climate action becomes a model for other communities. A badge we wear proudly.
- Steward the earth so future generations can live in abundance.
- A rising tide lifts all boats.





What's ahead 2021?

ClimateActionWR's focus for 2021 will be on achieving approval of the long-term Community Climate Action Strategy (80% greenhouse gas reduction by 2050) from all eight municipal councils in Waterloo region. Once approved, we will be working hard to raise awareness of the strategy across our entire community, and begin working with local partners and collaborators on the implementation of the 10 year plan.

We will also undertake our community's next greenhouse gas inventory, based on 2020 levels, to measure success against our initial community reduction target (6% GHG reduction by 2020, based on 2010 levels). This short term reduction target is an important first step toward our long-term '80by50' goal, and that progress report will be complete and shared with the community in 2021/2022.

Events

ClimateActionWR hosted five capacity-building events for our local municipalities and partner organizations, to explore various climate action solutions/options that could potentially be used locally to make progress on our GHG reduction targets:

- LIC Financing and Funding Opportunities
- Energy Storage
- Embodied Carbon
- Carbon Budgeting
- MEETS Coalition: the Metered Energy Efficiency Transaction Structure

Projects

In 2020, we completed two pilot projects to address emissions from our highest emitting sectors:

Transportation: research project on community active transportation hubs

We conducted a research pilot project into the feasibility of adding community active transportation hubs to increase active travel mode share for utilitarian trips under 5 km in the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo. Active transportation hubs are welcoming spaces where there are supports and tools to help clients choose active transportation to reach their destinations. The final report will soon be available on the ClimateActionWR website.

Buildings: aerial thermal imaging heat loss project

This pilot project explored the potential for a new tool to overcome the awareness barrier to investing in energy-efficient building upgrades: aerial thermal imaging. With this tool, homeowners and commercial building owners and/or managers were given access to an aerial thermal image of their building to compare its performance to others in the community. The visual images and social comparison were paired with targeted engagement campaigns and financial incentives to promote ICI building and home-owners to invest in energy audits/assessments and energy efficiency upgrades.

Stay
in touch with
ClimateActionWR via
our website, newsletters,
and social media, to learn
how you can contribute to
our community climate
action goals!

evolv1

The Cora Group's evolv1 is Canada's first net-positive energy, zero carbon commercial office building. Nestled within the David Johnston Research + Technology Park, this building was envisioned in 2014 by Sustainable Waterloo Region, The Cora Group, the David Johnston Research + Technology Park, and anchor tenant, EY Canada. Completed in the fall of 2018, evolv1 demonstrates the viability of building design that contributes to environmental wellbeing and the clean economy.

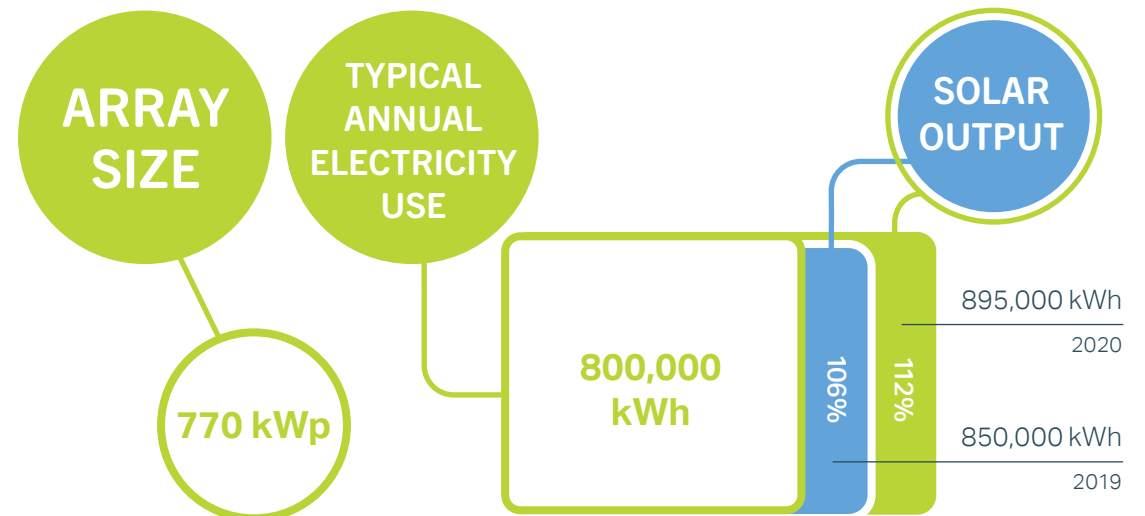
evolvGREEN

evolvGREEN is a collaborative workspace and centre for sustainability that seeks to inspire change, lead innovative research in sustainability, climate change and behaviour, and accelerate commercialization of ground breaking intellectual property.

In 2020, evolvGREEN started looking at ways to connect to the local community to better understand their sustainability issues. A framework for the Community Sustainability Lab concept was explored and work continues in 2021 so we may potentially bring this model to community members in the future.

A year away from evolv1

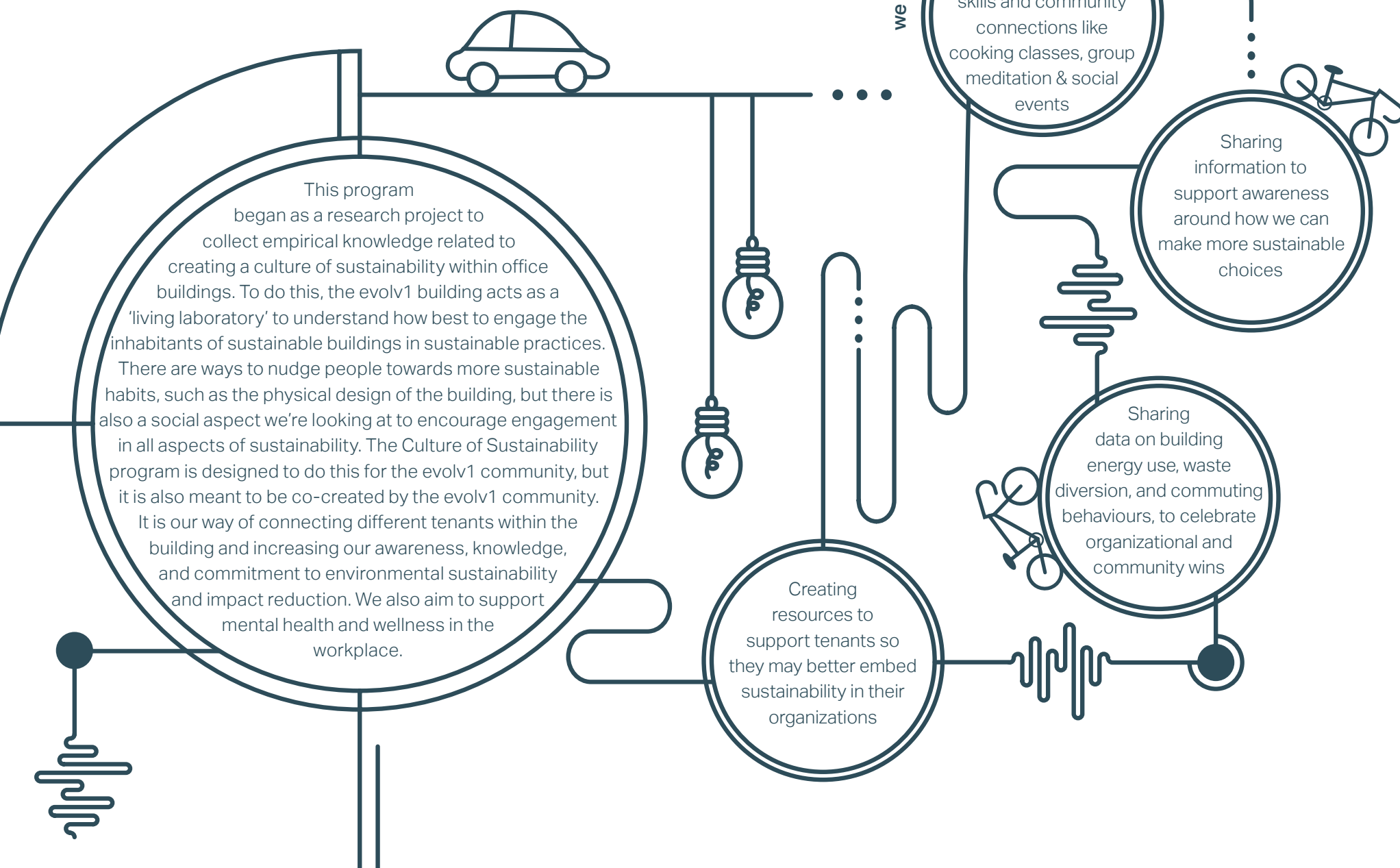
Like the other tenants of evolv1, The Accelerator Centre, Borealis AI, EY, TextNow, University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University, we have been working remotely for the majority of the year. Some have even made a permanent change to their working from home policies. But no matter where we are working, we are connected through our Culture of Sustainability program. We can do this because evolv1 is more than just a physical space; it is a community of organizations striving to be leaders in environmental sustainability. We are also able to amplify the impact of our individual work through collaborative programs and projects that aim to reduce environmental impact and improve well-being.



This panoramic shot is of the community space, connecting evolv1 with the ION and LRT station for the R+T Park

Source: David Johnston Research + Technology Park

Culture of Sustainability program



The evolvGREEN partnership includes Accelerator Centre, Sustainable Waterloo Region, University of Waterloo & Wilfrid Laurier University:



What is TravelWise?

TravelWise offers member organizations tools and services to help employees find innovative and sustainable transportation options that reduce the number of people driving alone on our roads. This is important now more than ever, given that transportation accounts for 49% of greenhouse gas emissions in Waterloo Region.

TravelWise is a program of the Region of Waterloo and is delivered through a partnership with Sustainable Waterloo Region.

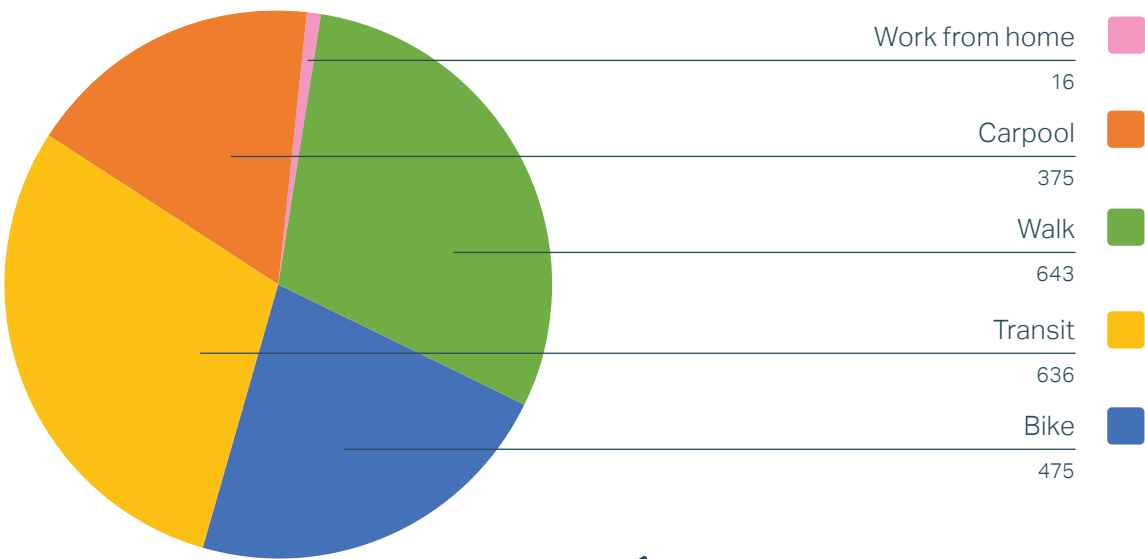
WinterWise highlights

Sustainable commuting is 'snow' problem with TravelWise. The month of February 2020 was dedicated to celebrating sustainable winter commutes with our WinterWise campaign. Commuters logged their trips on GoTravelWise.ca for a chance to win a \$100 Gift Certificate to the BIA of their choice!

The campaign resulted in 2,145 sustainable trips logged offsetting 2.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide. WinterWise aims to help commuters transition throughout the seasons, whether that's adapting their commutes for snow, ice, and slush or changing to another mode that is still sustainable. Sustainable transportation is important all-year-round, but especially in the winter! Why? Those drive-alone trips have a bigger impact in the winter as cold weather causes higher fuel consumption by 12-28%.

The campaign tied in with local initiatives to improve winter commuting and national events like Winter Walk and Bike to Work Days.

#WinterWiseWR



111 participants

2,145 trips

\$3,900 saved

15,015 km

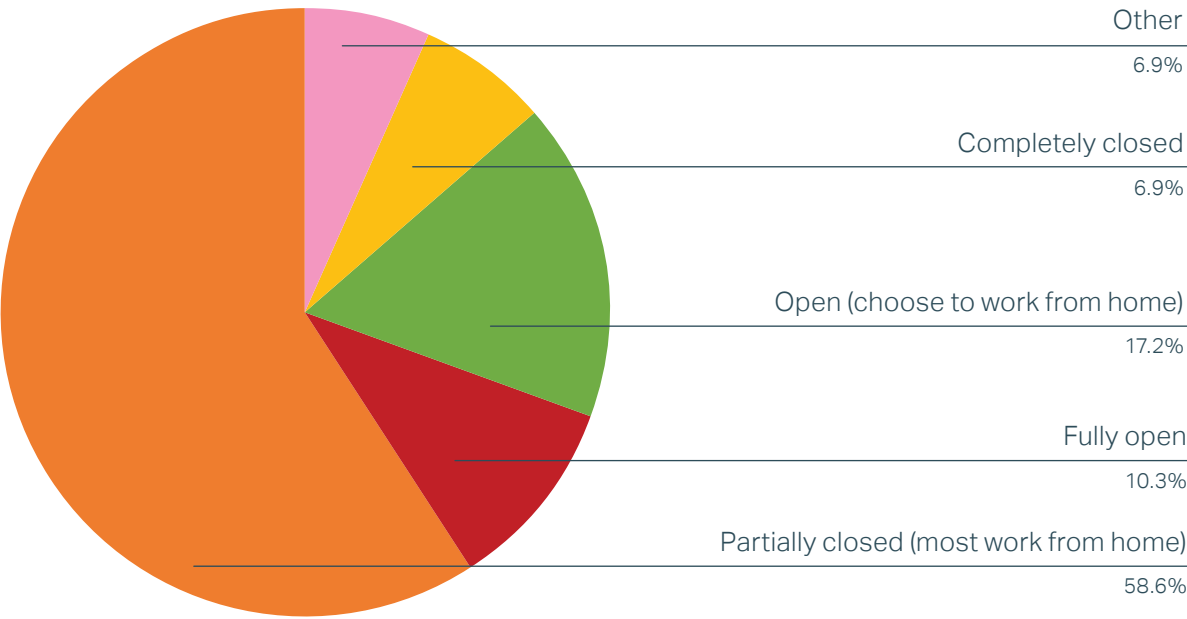
2.1 tons in C02 savings

Members

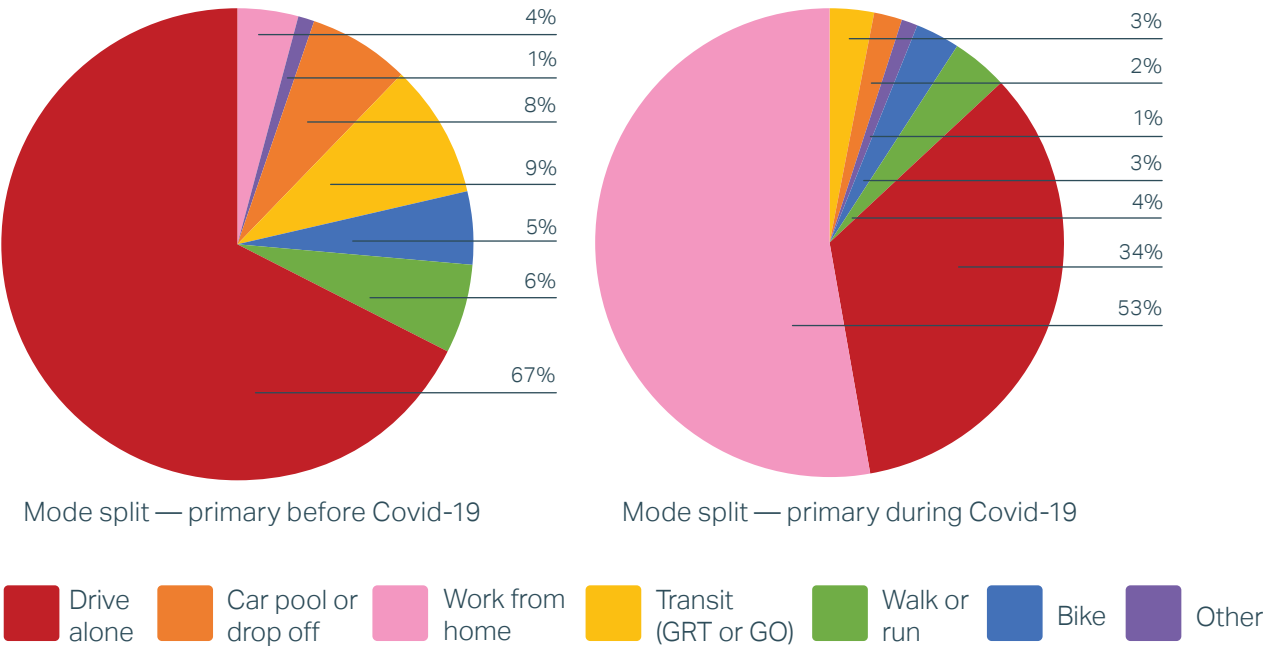
As of December 31, 2020



Worksite status during survey



Employee Travel Survey Results



A year of local leadership

TravelWise workplaces lead the way

This year, local workplaces needed to respond to the pandemic in unanticipated and innovative ways. Many TravelWise members were suddenly introduced to Work-from-Home programming and excelled at making it as seamless as possible for their employees. As the year went on, many members looked to improving active transportation supports at their workplace to make active and sustainable commutes the easy choice for their employees. This year we recognize our entire TravelWise membership for their resilience, innovation, and ongoing support for sustainable transportation!

Local mobility excellence

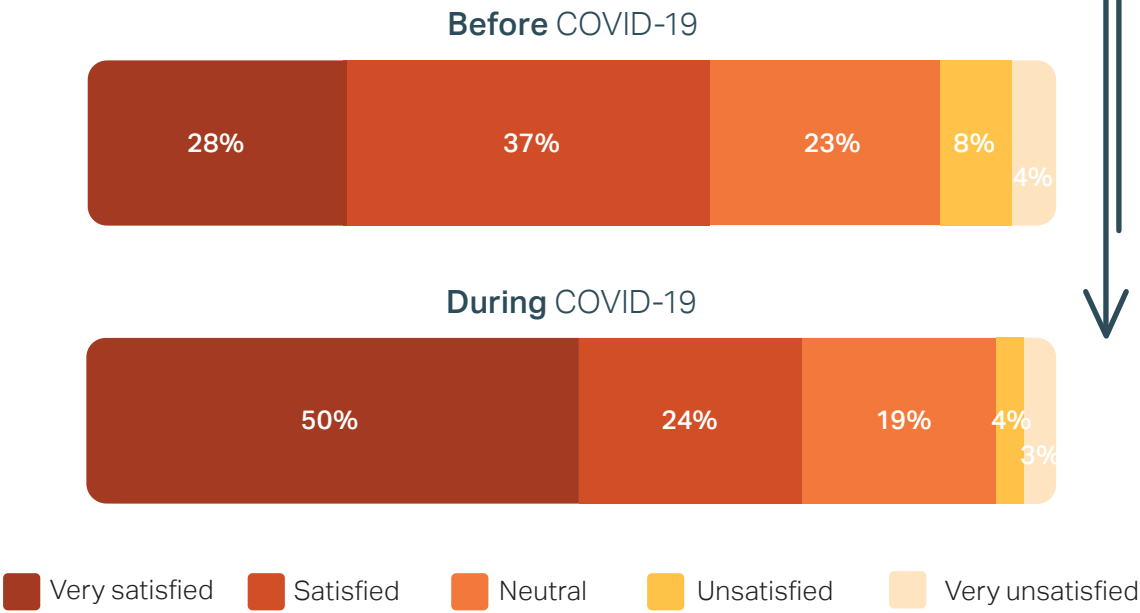
While people and organizations were adapting to the new normal due to COVID-19, several of our local municipal governments came together and stepped up to support active and public transportation. From April 1 to May 31, Grand River Transit (GRT) waived all fares for bus and LRT use. Over the past year, they have taken significant steps to keep transit riders and operators safe — including installing driver barriers, applying anti-microbial solutions on all vehicles, and automatically opening doors. The year also saw reduced traffic volumes on local roadways, and the Region worked with cities to re-allocate road space to promote active transportation. Thirty kilometers of temporary bike lanes were in place from early July until the end of October and were used for approximately 1,700 cycling trips per day — an increase of 41% on these roads!

How COVID-19 changed commuting in the Region of Waterloo

2020 saw many changes for each and every one of us. To understand how these changes affected local commutes, we engaged with TravelWise members through a survey and interviews with workplace champions. We found that a majority of work sites were at least partially closed due to COVID-19 (66%) and that a high proportion of employees were working from home (53%). Over the same time, we saw a 9% increase in people’s satisfaction with their commute. The pandemic provided an opportunity to understand how work-from-home can influence emissions reductions, traffic congestion, and employee satisfaction.

However, it remains to be seen how this shift will play out long-term. Many respondents indicated that they would likely shift back to driving alone as they transition back to work sites in the near future. Times of change are opportunities to form new habits, and the TravelWise team is excited to support a sustainable transition back to work in the near future. As part of that work, some great new ideas for how to support employers and employees alike are being planned as a result of the outreach to members and some program planning between the TravelWise partners.

Satisfaction with mode of transportation



TravelWise employee benefits

- Corporate pass (15% less than GRT’s monthly adult pass)
- Access to online carpool matching software
- Emergency ride home reimbursement program
- Promotions, events, and incentives to reward sustainable transportation choices

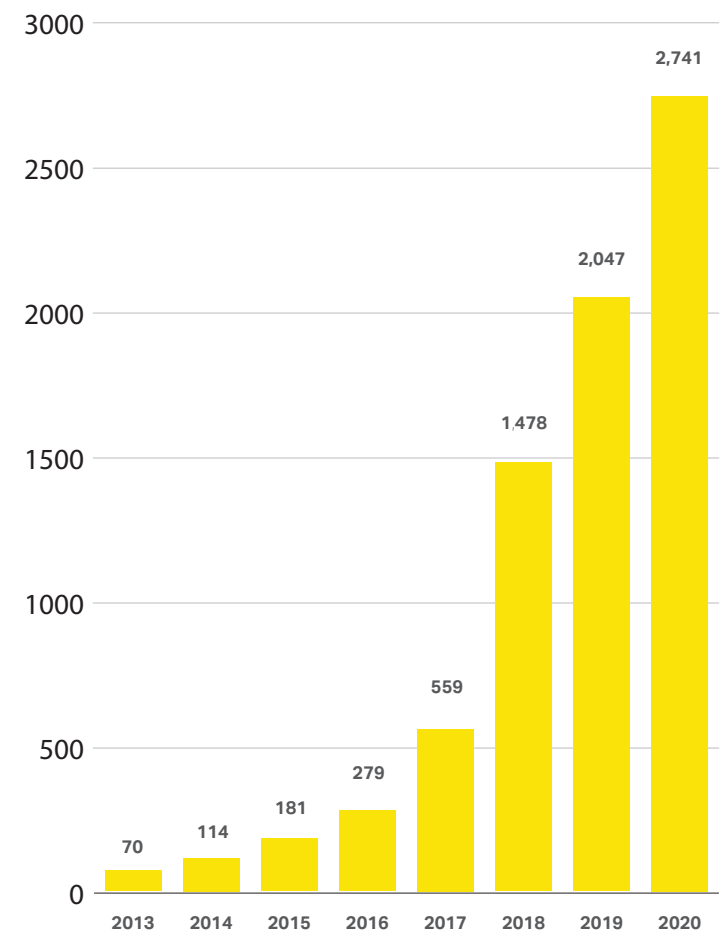
TravelWise employer benefits

- | | |
|---|--|
| Promotions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-site staff orientation/events• TravelWise-wide events• Marketing materials for employee engagement | Best Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource guides• Target setting and action plan assistance• All-member workplace champion meetings |
| Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee travel behaviour surveys• Workplace assessment• Program service uptake | Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employer awards• Brand exposure |

Charge WR

ChargeWR collaborates with organizations in Waterloo region to plan and implement activities that increase the number of electric vehicles (EVs) and charging stations in the region. Having already surpassed our goal of achieving 1000 EVs on the road by 2020 in 2018, the program continues to promote the expansion of the region's charging network as well as showcase the growing number of EV model options to generate interest and support for zero-emissions driving.

Electric vehicles in Waterloo region



The region
has nearly 200
Level 2 and 3
public charging
stations

Waterloo Region electric vehicle strategy

In September 2020, in partnership with Waterloo Region Community Energy, ChargeWR began developing an overview of existing electric vehicle charging infrastructure and policy across the Region of Waterloo. This strategy aims to provide a policy-based understanding of electric vehicle charging infrastructure locally to create a baseline for subsequent plans and activities.

BUSINESS HAVE A KEY ROLE

Enabling employees without home charging options or with range concerns to consider an EV for their personal vehicle

By investing in EV charging at your workplace, you are:

Reducing your organization's Scope 3 emissions

Reducing commuting costs for employees

Promoting and aligning values of environment and sustainability for improved employee engagement

Fleet conversion

Fleet conversion is a critical piece in reaching workplace sustainability targets, and it may soon become the industry standard. This means that your organization would can support our community's climate action goals while adding immense business value.

Benefits of investing in Fleet EVs:

- Reduce carbon footprint
- Reduce fuel costs
- Reduce ongoing maintenance
- Increase employee attraction and retention

Where we go from here

Conestoga Mall was the site of the first local public EV charging station in 2010, and now almost 200 Level 2 and 3 publicly available charging stations are found throughout the region. Nearly half of these public chargers are free to use. There are significantly more chargers when home and workplace chargers are also considered. The number of EVs on our roads has also increased, over 1,500% from 2015 to 2020, from 181 to 2,741. We easily surpassed our goal of achieving 1000 EVs on the road by 2020! This work continues, and in 2020 ChargeWR began work on our newest initiative, in partnership with Waterloo Region Community Energy, evaluating local electric vehicle charging infrastructure and policy to better understand where we are and where we need to go from here.