

Candidate details

Matt Rodrigues

Regional Councillor (Kitchener)

What is your motivation for running for election?

I am running to continue serving as one of Kitchener's Regional Councillors because the issues facing us need steady and curious leadership that brings the community together to help tackle them. I firmly believe that local government is the closest to our collective everyday and that a responsive, sustainable, and affordable Region is what we all want to see. With experience working as an Urban Planner across Ontario, I understand what it takes to plan a great region, engage those typically left out of the discussion, and foster connected neighbourhoods. What propelled me to run in 2022 is what continues to propel me today, that Waterloo Region is a community with great ambition and that bringing people together as your Regional Councillor can help solve our most pressing challenges.

What are your top three priority issues you want to address at Regional Council?

I have three main priority areas in this campaign for more homes, better infrastructure, and transit you can count on. I would invite you to read more about all of them at <https://www.mattrodrigues.ca/priorities>.

What is your vision for each of the issues you identified above?

"Waterloo Region needs more homes people can actually afford, including affordable housing, supportive housing, and emergency shelter options. Delays to major Regional housing projects have slowed progress at a time when more people are struggling to find stable housing. We need to build faster, use public land more effectively, and work with trusted community partners to deliver the housing our growing Region needs.

The infrastructure that we rely on everyday, like roads and water systems, need to be reliable and ready for a growing Region. The challenges we faced in early 2026 made it clear that we cannot afford to fall behind on critical infrastructure investments. As a member of Regional Council, I have supported practical investments and solutions to address water capacity challenges. Investing early in repairs and long-term infrastructure planning will reduce costs over time and deliver the reliable services residents expect with consistency and care. More intense storms, flooding, and extreme heat put pressure on the infrastructure that we count on. We need to invest in infrastructure that is built to withstand these challenges, protect homes and businesses, and reduce costly emergency repairs.

Waterloo Region's transit system should be frequent, affordable, and reliable. Investments in Grand River Transit will give us all more choice in how we move around our community, making transit a first choice across Kitchener, not a last resort. I support creating a Transit Advisory Committee that includes riders and community members in decision making around service changes and fares, expanding fast and frequent bus service, and keeping Stage 2 LRT moving forward.

What tangible steps would you take to increase the supply of affordable housing across the Region?

One of the best ways that we can increase the supply of affordable housing is to start by protecting the units that we already have. We need to expand eviction prevention and portable rent supplement programs to help people stay housed and reduce pressure on emergency shelters and homelessness services. I have also been proud to advocate for housing providers in our Region to make sure they have the funding, resources, and tools to do their work and maintain existing affordable units. We also need to commit to Waterloo Region Housing Revitalization (e.g., the Mooregate Redevelopment) and secure funding partnerships to deliver the hundreds of new affordable housing units our community expects over the next four years. For major projects like the Kitchener Central Transit Hub and Charles Street Terminal re-development, I have advocated for retaining public ownership of portions of the land to support permanent affordable housing and strong mixed-income communities. At the same time, we need to expand access to supportive housing options that include health, addictions, and social services, while recognizing the need for shelter of last resort.

What is your plan to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care and create additional child care spaces?

The Region's ability to add new affordable Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care spaces is constrained by available funding from Provincial and Federal partners. In 2026, I supported a motion advocating to other orders of government in support of growing the number of available spaces. In the meantime, I fully support opportunities for integration of child care spaces in other Regional projects (e.g., building the space for a future operator as part of housing developments), advocating for fair wages for early childhood education staff, expansion of infant spaces, and engaging with staff and organizations to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care.

What is your position on the Provincial government's efforts to increase private sector involvement in drinking water and wastewater services?

I strongly support keeping our drinking water services and wastewater services publicly owned and would oppose moves to privatize the system.

What role should the Region play in protecting publicly owned water services?

For many decades, Waterloo Region staff have operated one of the most complex drinking water systems in Ontario to reliably serve the needs of a growing community. We need to demonstrate that we have clear plans to maintain and grow our water capacity, that we are accountable to our infrastructure commitments, and that we are creative and collaborative in identifying solutions and resolving problems that arise. We also play a role in explaining the value of our water services to the community and provide opportunities for public education.

What forms of inequity do you believe are the most significant challenges in our community? How would you address them?

"Some of the largest inequities facing Waterloo Region are rooted in affordability, access, and opportunity. The growing gap between household incomes and housing costs has left many in our community struggling to find stable and affordable housing, while rising costs of food, transportation, and childcare place additional pressure on families, seniors,

newcomers, and those living on fixed or lower incomes. This is further compounded by uneven access to public transit, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

Consider a single income parent who misses a bus that only comes every 30 minutes, and has to pay the fare for their children because child care is not available. I believe that local government needs to continue to invest in the services that people count on everyday like affordable transit (including connections to new neighbourhoods and jobs), housing, and childcare. We cannot solve these challenges with continued austerity budgets.

I have been and will continue to support initiatives like community paramedicine and exploring a community-based alternative response pilot for mental health and addiction-related emergency calls. I am committed to continue funding upstream initiatives that provide funding to community organizations that do important work across the Region."

What organizations, initiatives, or movements have you supported that work to address systemic discrimination or oppression? Please describe your involvement.

Through my work at Regional Council, I have been pleased to support our updated Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan as a guiding document to combatting hate, addressing mental health and addictions needs together, creating safe and inclusive spaces, and addressing intimate partner violence / gender based violence and missing and murdered Indigenous women. At the same time I have and will continue to show up groups like the Centre for Mutual Wellbeing in their work to report on and respond to hate in our community and Immigration Partnership in their work to support newcomers. I am grateful for the work of Indigenous-led organizations like the Willow River Centre (including their new land trust!) and Crow Shield Lodge who support Indigenous health, healing, and reconciliation.

Can you commit to publicly speaking up in favour of these demands, including at Council meetings?

Yes