



# **Community Engagement Summary – Phase 3**

## **Phase Three**

Regional Municipality of Niagara

25 July 2025

<b>Project name</b>		Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan					
<b>Document title</b>		Community Engagement Summary – Phase 3   Phase Three					
<b>Project number</b>		12628447					
<b>File name</b>		12628447 Niagara Region Community Engagement Summary Report - Phase Three					
<b>Status Code</b>	<b>Revision</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>		<b>Approved for issue</b>		
			<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
S4	C01	Katrina McCullough					

## GHD

Contact: Katrina McCullough, Engagement Leader | GHD  
70 York Street, Suite 801  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 1S9, Canada  
**T** +1 416 360 1600 | **E** info-northamerica@ghd.com | **ghd.com**

# Executive Summary

Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan) will provide a framework and direction for waste management over the next 25 years and beyond. The Plan is being developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Assessment of system – where we are now
- Phase Two – Development of direction and system options – where we want to go
- Phase Three – Selection of the preferred system – how we're getting there

Feedback during Phase Three was collected from 46 participants through two online public open houses and a Regional and LAM Staff Engagement Session. This input was crucial in further refining the recommendations and the proposed implementation of the draft Plan before it is presented to Regional Council for approval. In total, throughout the development of the WMSP, Niagara Region engaged with over 125 people via nine (9) open houses and received over 2800 survey responses.

The recommendations were positively received by participants, with comments and suggestions primarily related to how the recommendations would be implemented.

Comments included:

- Support for greenhouse gas reduction targets and recommendations that reduce greenhouse gases and respond to climate change, such as renewable energy generation and decarbonization, climate adaptation measures
- Suggestions for various measures to increase participation in diversion programs, such as clear bags, textile diversion programs and household hazardous waste diversion programs
- Concerns about a lack of knowledge on how to use waste diversion programs and the benefits of diversion programs such as the Green Bin program
- Confusion related to the transition of the Blue Box program to Circular Material
- Mixed opinions regarding the consideration of energy-from-waste
- Support for the Parks and Public Space Strategy and the Excess Soil Management Strategy

The input provided by participants will be taken into consideration as the recommendations and implementation plan are finalized, and as the draft Plan is prepared. The draft Plan will be presented to the Public Works Committee in fall 2025 for review and comment. It is currently anticipated that the final Plan will be presented to Regional Council for approval in winter 2025/2026.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Project overview</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Community engagement overview</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Who we engaged	4
3.2 What we asked	4
3.3 How we informed the community	4
3.4 How we engaged the community	6
<b>4. Feedback from the public and staff</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Next steps</b>	<b>8</b>

## Table index

Table 3.1	Communication tactics	5
-----------	-----------------------	---

## Appendices

Appendix A	Communication Tactics
Appendix B	Public Open House Presentation

# **1. Introduction**

This report summarizes the community engagement activities conducted during Phase Three of the development of the Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan (the Plan). It provides an overview of the project (Section 2), describes who was engaged, how they were engaged and what they were asked (Section 3), summarizes the feedback received from the public, Region and LAM staff (Section 4), and describes how the feedback will inform the draft Plan (Section 5).

## **2. Project overview**

Niagara Region (the Region) is developing the Plan to guide waste management practices for the next 25 years and beyond. The Region delivers a variety of waste management services and programs to Niagara's 12 Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) to meet community needs while also promoting waste diversion, reduction and reuse.

The Plan aims to align with Regional Council's goal of net-zero corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050, and with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario.

The Plan is being developed in three phases:

- Phase One – Assessment of system – where we are now
- Phase Two – Development of direction and system options – where we want to go
- Phase Three – Selection of the preferred system – how we're getting there

This report documents the public engagement activities undertaken during Phase Three.

## **3. Community engagement overview**

Community engagement is integral to building trust and enabling informed, sustainable decisions. While not mandatory for developing the Plan, it ensures the Plan reflects the needs, aspirations and values of those who live, work and study in Niagara. It also includes diverse perspectives, and ensures the Region understands how interested parties view waste management practices and potential waste reduction, diversion and disposal options.

### **3.1 Who we engaged**

Engagement during Phase Three built on efforts from Phase One and Two and included the following key audiences:

- Community members (residents)
- Local Urban Indigenous organizations
- Region staff and Council
- LAM staff
- Local and provincial agricultural committees
- Business alliances, associations and organizations, such as Business Improvement Area (BIA) groups and Downtown Associations
- Charities, not-for-profit groups and local environmental advocacy groups
- Public sector organizations such as school boards, colleges and universities
- Community service groups and clubs
- Social enterprises

### **3.2 What we asked**

During Phase One, interested parties were invited to provide input to help lay the groundwork for the Plan's strategic direction, including its mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals. Phase Two engagement focused on gathering feedback to inform the development of programs, services, and initiatives, specifically by seeking input on the proposed mission, vision, guiding principles, and goals, as well as on existing and potential new waste management programs, services, and initiatives.

During Phase Three interested parties were invited to provide feedback on the programs, services and initiatives proposed for inclusion in the Plan. This input was crucial in further refining the recommendations and shaping the implementation approach, before presentation of the final Plan to Regional Council approval.

### **3.3 How we informed the community**

The Region used a range of communication tactics to inform interested parties about Phase Three and invite participation. These included letters to interested parties, a social media campaign, public notices and advertisements.

A description of the various methods used to reach our interested parties is included in Table 3.1. Examples of these communications are included in Appendix A.

**Table 3.1 Communication tactics**

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Deployment Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Public Open House invitation letter circulated to the list of interested parties	April 24, 2025	Email sent to 315 recipients
Newsletter content for LAMs	May 8	Content shared with Public Work Officials and communications specialists at the LAMs
Green Scene (Public Works Newsletter) article	March 28, 2025	Newsletter sent to 2,151 recipients
<u>Niagara Region website</u> ( <a href="https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/">https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/waste-management-strategic-plan/</a> )	N/A	145 webpage views as of May 2025
Newspaper ads	May 11 to 26, 2025	Digital ads posted through Metroland and Village Media resulting in 136,266 impressions across 7 municipalities: Welland, St. Catharines, Port Colborne, Pelham, Thorold, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie  Print ads in 7 newspapers: Welland Tribune, St. Catharines Standard, Niagara Falls Review, Niagara News Now, Port Colborne Observer, Fort Erie Observer and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Lake Report
Paid and organic social media Facebook X (formerly Twitter) Instagram Nextdoor Reddit	May 8 to 29, 2025	10 organic social media posts across all platforms 2 paid social media posts across all platforms Total of 187,373 post impressions

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Deployment Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Waste App campaign	May 11 to 29, 2025	Campaign received by all users signed up to receive notifications 82,787 reminders set for 50,383 addresses 1,335 campaign web link clicks
Public notice/media release	May 13, 2025	Posted on <u>Niagara Region Public Notices</u> ( <a href="https://www.niagararegion.ca/news/notices/default.aspx">https://www.niagararegion.ca/news/notices/default.aspx</a> ) No analytics available
Posters and postcards	N/A	About 500 postcards picked up About 50 posters hung up in municipal buildings
Digital screen slide	May 5, 2025	Niagara Region Headquarters
Radio ads	May 11 to 29, 2025	Ads played across 7 stations with a minimum of 175,400 impressions
Community booths at customer service areas, libraries, and other public facilities	May 7 to 24, 2025	13 booths in 8 municipalities (St. Catharines, West Lincoln, Grimsby, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lincoln, Welland, Niagara Falls, and Thorold)
The Plan's contact mailing list	April 8, 2025	Email sent to 262 recipients

### 3.4 How we engaged the community

To support meaningful and accessible engagement in Phase Three, the Region hosted 46 participants at two online public open houses and a focused engagement session with Region and LAM staff:

- Two online open houses were held in the morning of May 26, 2025 and the evening of May 29, 2025
- One staff engagement session was held with LAM and Region staff on May 22, 2025

The open houses and engagement session provided a platform for the public and staff to share their perspectives on the proposed recommendations and implementation approach. This approach built on the surveys and open houses undertaken during Phases One and Two of the project and allowed for more in-depth discussion of the recommendations. Each session featured a presentation and an opportunity for participants to provide comments and ask questions. In total, throughout the development of the WMSP, Niagara Region engaged with over 125 people via nine (9) open houses and received over 2800 survey responses.



The Phase Three presentations for the public open houses and for the Region and LAM staff engagement session were similar and an example is included in Appendix B. Input received during the online open houses and engagement session is summarized in Section 4.

## **4. Feedback from the public and staff**

Feedback was received from the public through a question-and-answer session at the open houses. Below is a summary of comments received from the public:

- Comment that the general public do not understand the benefits of using the green bin compared to putting organics in the landfill
- Questions regarding how other cities are disposing of waste while not increasing greenhouse gas emissions
- Suggestion to consider clear bags as an effective way to divert waste from the landfill
- Suggestion to focus on textile diversion
- Suggestion to make it easier to dispose of small quantities of hazardous waste materials
- Question about how much of what goes into the Blue Box is recycled, and concerns about having to approach Circular Materials to receive information on these metrics
- Concerns about litter created when waste is set out on the curbside on windy days
- Comment that many residents new to Niagara are not familiar with how to use the Region's waste management system
- Question about whether energy-from-waste or incineration is being considered, and some comments both in support of, and not supportive of, energy-from-waste
- Interest in the Excess Soil Management Strategy and suggestion to collaborate with the Region Agricultural Policy and Action Committee

Feedback was received from LAM and Regional staff at the engagement session and through written comments received following the session. Similar to previous phases, there was an interest in the Parks and Public Space Strategy and in the Excess Soil Management Strategy. In addition, the following comments were received:

- Support for greenhouse gas reduction targets, climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, as well as a suggestion to apply a climate justice lens to waste planning and align targets with national and provincial benchmarks
- Recommendation to consider programs and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases and respond to climate change, such as renewable energy systems at waste management facilities, renewable natural gas generation, fleet decarbonization and climate risk modelling
- Support for increased collaboration between the cost-sharing, inter-municipal agreements and harmonized legislation

- Support for innovative implementation approaches to address financial barriers such as cost-sharing, public-private partnerships or phased funding.

## **5. Next steps**

The input provided by participants will be taken into consideration as the recommendations and implementation plan are finalized, and as the draft Plan is prepared. The draft Plan will be presented to the Public Works Committee in fall 2025 for review and comment. It is currently anticipated that the final Plan will be presented to Regional Council for approval in winter 2025.

# Appendices

# **Appendix A**

## **Communication Tactics**

The future of waste is in our hands!

# Your input today, our actions tomorrow.

Provide feedback one more time  
before the Waste Management  
Strategic Plan is launched.

Turn over for more information





## The Waste Management Strategic Plan will provide a framework and direction for waste management over the next 25 years.

Join one of our Phase Three online open houses for a sneak peek of the draft plan, and contribute your insights to shape the future of waste management in Niagara.

### Questions?

[wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca](mailto:wmstratplan@niagararegion.ca)

### Online Open Houses:

Monday, May 26 | 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Thursday, May 29 | 7 - 8 p.m.

Niagara  Region

Use the QR code or visit  
[niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste)  
to access the online open houses.



# **Appendix B**

**Public Open House Presentation**

# Niagara Region Waste Management Strategic Plan

Public Open House

May 26, 2025

May 29, 2025



# Land Acknowledgement

Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

There are many First Nations, Métis and Inuit from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. The Regional Municipality of Niagara stands with all Indigenous peoples, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

# Agenda

- Why Niagara Region is preparing a Waste Management Strategic Plan
- What we heard during public consultation
- Vision, guiding principles, goals and targets
- Recommendations for programs, services and initiatives
- Implementing the Strategic Plan
- Q&A

Niagara Region's  
Project Partners



# The Waste Management Strategic Plan

- Guides Niagara Region waste management system over the next 25 years
- Helps identify new and different ways to use waste as a resource
- Reduces the community's environmental footprint and the environmental footprint of waste management operations



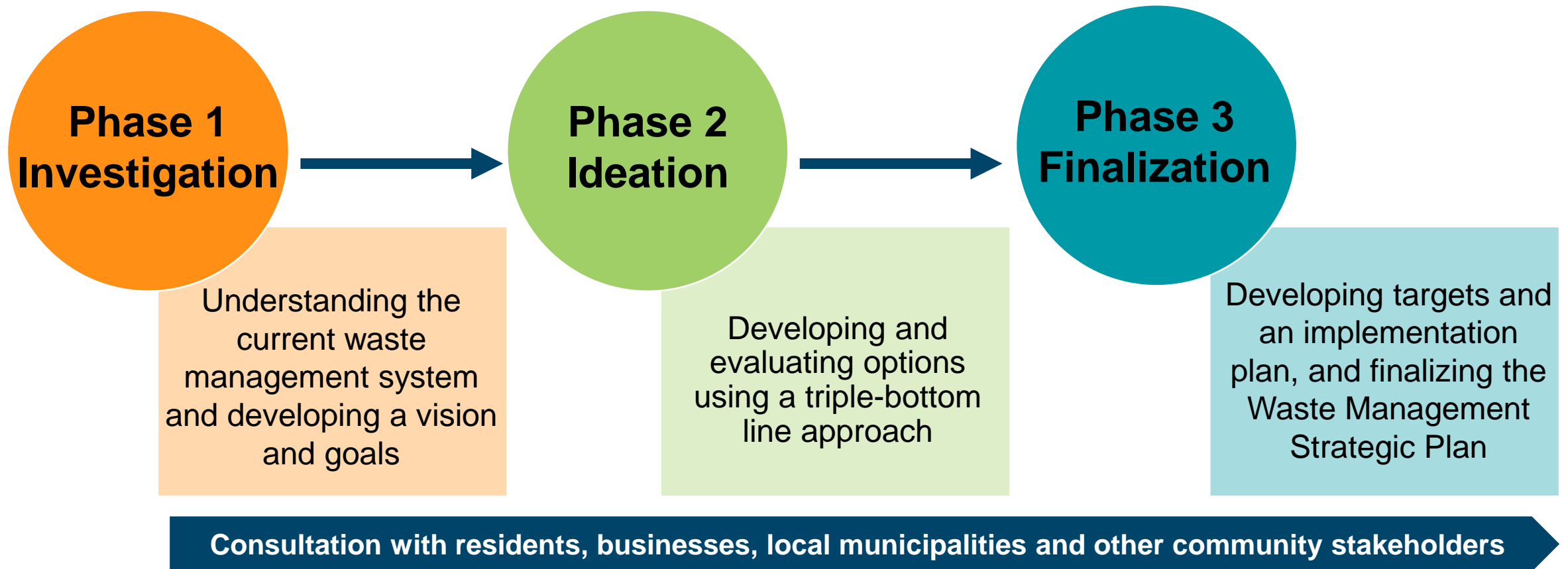


# Why Prepare a Strategic Plan

- Niagara Region is expected to experience significant growth in the next 30 years with some areas expected to grow by 25 – 40%.
- Strategic Plan will include programs to be responsive to this growth, drive reduction and diversion, and continue to modernize and innovate our waste management system.
- Niagara Region Council has set a goal of net-zero corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.



# How the Strategic Plan was Developed



# Consultation on the Strategic Plan

- Two Surveys with over 2,000 responses
- Seven Online Open Houses attended by over 80 residents, businesses and staff
- Presentations and briefings to Regional councillors
- Meetings with local municipalities
- Booths at community events
- Advertising and coverage on TV, social media, emails, newsletters, newspapers, radio ads, and in the Waste App



# What We Heard from the Public

- Residents are satisfied with waste collection in Niagara
- The community agrees we should lead the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services
- Keeping waste management affordable and easy to use is key
- More promotion and education and by-law enforcement with a focus on promoting sustainable behaviours
- Support to reduce the waste we generate and divert more from landfill
- Continue to evolve and innovate waste management to manage a growing Region

# Vision and Guiding Principles

**Our vision is to lead the way in sustainable and innovative waste management services, to support a thriving community for generations to come.**

**Our guiding principles:**

Customer  
Focused

Financially  
Responsible

Environmentally  
Considerate

Future-Thinking

Innovative and  
Optimized

Collaborative and  
Engaged

Inclusive

Adaptive

Transparent



# Goals



## **Optimize Waste Management Resources and Infrastructure**

Improve the efficiency of Niagara Region's waste management system and effectively utilize financial resources to deliver services.



## **Increase the Beneficial Reuse of Materials**

Promote programs and initiatives that encourage the reuse of materials, reducing the amount entering the waste stream.



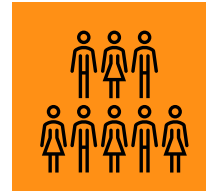
## **Strive to be a Zero-Waste Community**

Promote programs and initiatives to reduce waste generation, thereby requiring fewer resources for waste disposal.



## **Increase Beneficial Recovery of Material from Waste**

Develop programs and initiatives to divert materials away from Niagara landfills for beneficial recovery.



## **Increase Participation in Waste Management Programs**

Enhance community engagement through programs and initiatives that boost participation in waste management efforts.



## **Reduce the carbon footprint of the waste management system**

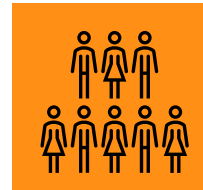
Implement programs and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the waste management system, including new/improved infrastructure, operational changes and advocacy efforts.

# Targets

**Targets will be measurable KPIs to track progress against the goals:**



**Maintenance of assets in "Good" to "Very Good" condition**



**Increase green bin participation rate**



**Reduce the amount of garbage and organics generated**



**Reduce greenhouse gas emissions**



**Increase percent of organics captured in green bin**

# Recommendations

Twenty-three recommendations will be implemented over three phases



Community  
Engagement and  
Education



Policies and  
By-Laws



Waste Reduction and  
Reuse



Waste  
Collection and  
Operations



Processing and  
Disposal  
Infrastructure



Innovation

**Phase 1**

2026 - 2035

**Phase 2**

2036 - 2045

**Phase 3**

2046 - 2050

# Phase 1 – The First 10 Years

## Reduce and Divert



- Incorporate public education with digital platforms
- Develop collection guidelines for new developments
- Develop food waste reduction strategy
- Develop waste reduction strategy for condos and apartments
- Develop parks and public space strategy
- Maximize efficiency and improve accessibility of drop off depots

## Optimize



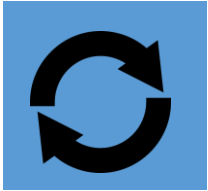
- Explore user fees and options for cost recovery for depots/landfills and for collection
- Conduct waste characterization studies
- Review and optimize collections contract
- Develop excess soil management strategy
- Review and update operations software

## Plan for the Future



- Develop a strategy to manage our long-term waste disposal needs
- Study new and emerging technologies
- Consider opportunities to integrate with the Wastewater Strategy
- Develop a climate mitigation and adaptation strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plan for community emergencies

# Phases 2 and 3 (2036 – 2050)



- Develop community reduction and reuse programs
- Develop single-use plastic strategy
- Develop construction and demolition strategy
- Review feasibility for leaf and yard waste processing facility
- Develop education centre
- Shift organics processing from composting to anaerobic digestion
- Contribute to innovation labs

# Recommendation Spotlight

# Parks and Public Space Strategy

Start Year:  
2026

**Keeping Niagara's parks and public spaces clean and litter-free is a shared priority of the Region and local municipalities.**

**We'll review options to improve waste management in parks and public spaces including:**

- Review of future options for the management of garbage and blue box recyclables from public spaces
- Service level agreements with local municipalities, including collection frequency
- Reviewing the placement of receptacles to identify gaps and opportunities
- Standardizing the design, messaging, and signage of receptacles, taking Extended Producer Responsibility into consideration



# Recommendation Spotlight

## Multi-Residential Waste Strategy

The Region is expected to grow and intensify over the next 30 years, adding more dense housing such as condos and apartments.

We'll explore reduction and diversion options with local municipalities, property manager and developers including:

- Design requirements for new buildings, such as tri-sorters
- Tailored education and outreach programs
- Voluntary retrofit and chute closure programs
- Expand collection to buildings not currently serviced
- Front end collection



# Recommendation Spotlight

## Food Waste Reduction Strategy

Start Year:  
2026

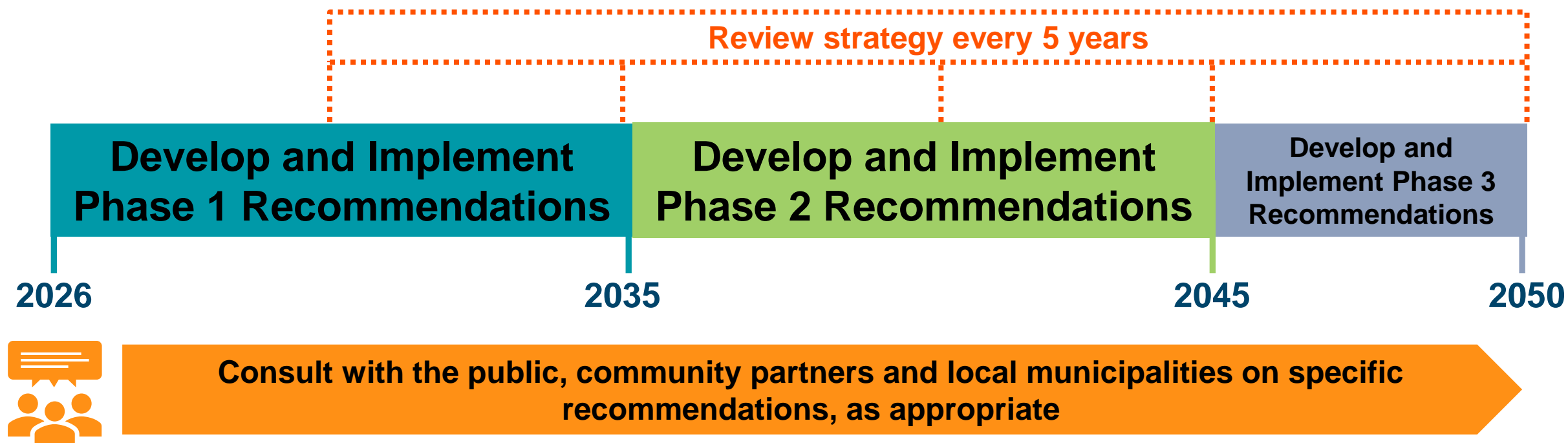
**We'll explore ways to reduce food waste and increase green bin participation, including:**

- Develop partnerships with community organizations such as food rescue organizations
- Develop a tailored education and outreach campaign focused on reducing food waste, such as the National Zero Waste Council's Love Food Hate Waste Canada
- Use waste management bylaw to divert more food waste away from landfill





# Implementing the Strategic Plan



# Next steps

- Public Open Houses
  - Monday May 26, 11am – 12pm
  - Thursday May 29, 7 - 8pm
- Fall 2025
  - Release draft Waste Management Strategic Plan
  - Present draft Plan to Public Works Committee
- Winter 2025
  - Finalize Plan and present to Council for approval

# Thank you!



For more information, please visit

Visit [Niagara Region's Waste Management Strategic Plan](#)

([niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste](https://niagararegion.ca/future-of-waste))

