

Region of Waterloo looking for new spaces for child-care ^[1]

Author: Sandstrom, Alison

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Excerpts

On the heels of a decision to look for regionally-owned lands and buildings that could be used for housing, the Region of Waterloo is now also exploring whether any could be repurposed for new child-care centres.

At a committee meeting Tuesday, councillors approved a recommendation from staff to consider using regionally owned buildings, lands and housing developments to create more non-profit child-care spaces.

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9,200 kids on region's child-care waitlist

The region currently has child-care spaces for only 32 per cent of kids under four years old – 9,200 children are waitlisted, according to a staff report.

The region's director of children's services, Barb Cardow said the waitlist has grown by 115 per cent since the announcement of \$10-a-day child-care in 2022.

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Under the \$10-a-day agreement, the region has a target to create 3,725 new licenced child-care spaces by 2026. That would provide coverage for 37 per cent of children.

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Lack of land major barrier

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"It seems that besides the workforce, a significant barrier is accessing land – affordable, appropriate land or buildings – that are suitable for licenced childcare," she said.

Child-care spaces could be created through renovating existing buildings or exploring modular/portable-based structures, the staff report said.

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