

WATERLOO UNITED SOCCER CLUB

Developing People and Strengthening Community in Waterloo Region through the Beautiful Game

Strategic Vision: 2026 to 2029

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS 3

OUR STORY SO FAR: 55 YEARS OF BLACK AND YELLOW 4

OUR NORTH STAR 5

- OUR MISSION
- OUR VISION

LIVING OUR MISSION DAILY 5

OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES 6

THE FUTURE WE CAN BUILD TOGETHER 7

STRATEGIC PILLARS & GOALS 8

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1: PRIORITIZE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT 8-9

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: FOCUS ON COMMUNITY IMPACT 10

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3: RAISE THE STANDARD OF PLAY 11-12

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE 12-13

CALL TO ACTION: THE WATERLOO WAY 14

MESSAGE FROM THE 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As we look ahead to the next three years, we have a rare and powerful opportunity to shape the future of soccer in our region. Our goal is to establish a foundation for our club that's stronger and more cohesive, and one that will better serve our young athletes for generations to come.

Soccer has always been more than a game. It's a way to connect people, to build character, and to unite communities around something bigger than ourselves. Waterloo, both the city and the region, is part of one of the most dynamic and diverse soccer communities in the country, with the potential to be a leader in the next chapter of the game's growth in Canada.

Our goal is simple, but significant: to grow the game through meaningful play and experiences for all players. From the first-time participant who simply loves being on the field, to the young athlete dreaming of a professional career, every player deserves a place to belong, a place to grow, and a place to fall in love with the game.

Achieving this requires more than plans or programs. It requires commitment, collaboration, and humility. It requires a willingness to put aside our individual egos and personal interests to build something truly special together. It means creating alignment between our technical teams, our volunteers, our families, and our community partners - so that every action we take, big or small, moves us closer to a shared vision of excellence and inclusion.

Now is our time. Our time to lead with purpose, to act with integrity, and to make decisions that will benefit not just today's players, but the next generation who will carry this club and this community forward.

This Strategic Vision is a roadmap, a living document that will evolve as we move forward; but it's also a rallying cry. A call to every coach, parent, player, and partner who believes in what soccer can do. Together, we can build something that creates a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of people in our community. Together, we can make this region a model for what Canadian soccer should be: community-driven, player-focused, and relentlessly committed to quality.

2026 Board of Directors
Waterloo United Soccer Club



OUR STORY SO FAR: 55 YEARS OF BLACK AND YELLOW

2026 marks our 55th anniversary of the club. As we embrace this milestone, it's important to acknowledge that Waterloo United stands on the shoulders of those who came before us - the founders, volunteers, coaches, and players who built this club from a small community organization into one of the most respected soccer institutions in Southwestern Ontario. Their dedication, passion, and belief in the power of sport laid the foundation for everything we are today.

For over five decades, Waterloo United has been more than a soccer club - it has been a reflection of our community's values: hard work, inclusion, and pride in doing things the right way. Thousands of players have worn our crest, each one adding their own chapter to a story built on connection, competition, and care.

Now, as we enter a new era for Canadian soccer, we recognize that our responsibility is twofold: to honour the legacy that has brought us here, and to carry that momentum forward into the next chapter. We are reconnecting with our roots and rediscovering what makes Waterloo United special, while also reaffirming and modernizing our identity to meet the opportunities of today and tomorrow.

This means holding ourselves to higher standards, investing in quality across every program, and leading by example in how a community club can help shape the broader mission of Canadian soccer. The future of our game is being written right now. Our commitment, and responsibility, is to ensure that when the next generation looks back, they see a club that not only stayed true to its values but also helped move the sport forward in our *community.*

OUR NORTH STAR

Every successful organization needs a clear sense of direction; a purpose that guides decisions, unites people, and keeps us focused on what truly matters.

At Waterloo United, our North Star is defined by our Mission and Vision - they shape who we are, how we operate, and what we aspire to become. They remind us why we exist, who we serve, and how we measure success, not only in wins and losses, but in the growth of our players, coaches, and community.

OUR MISSION

To deliver inclusive, high-quality soccer experiences that develop players, coaches, and people through a foundation of integrity, growth, and excellence.

OUR VISION

To be a leading soccer club in Canada, empowering players from U3 and up to reach their full potential both on and off the field.



LIVING OUR MISSION DAILY

Our Mission and Vision define where we are going - but our Guiding Principles define how we get there. They represent the standards we hold ourselves to each day, on and off the field.

These principles are more than words; they are the behaviours, choices, and commitments that bring our mission to life. They shape how we coach, how we lead, how we communicate, and how we represent Waterloo United in the community.

By living these values daily, every player, parent, coach, and volunteer will truly experience what it means to be part of Waterloo United - a club built on connection, integrity, and a shared pursuit of excellence.



OUR VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

▪ **Community Commitment:** We strengthen the health, culture, and spirit of Waterloo Region through soccer.

▪ **Excellence:** We commit to pursuing excellence in our programming, coaching, operations and development every day in order to be the best we can for the players we serve.

▪ **Inclusivity & Accessibility:** We believe soccer should be available to everyone, regardless of background or ability.

▪ **Integrity & Accountability:** We lead by example by practicing what we preach, respecting our commitments, and leading with professionalism.

▪ **Player-Centered Development:** We believe every decision supports the growth and success of our players and teams - technically, tactically, physically, and with skills to help them well beyond the field of play.

▪ **Lifelong Learning:** We foster curiosity, open-mindedness, and continuous growth for staff, coaches, players, and volunteers.

▪ **Collaboration:** We work together with families, schools, clubs, and community partners to support positive experiences and long-term opportunities in the game.

THE FUTURE WE CAN BUILD TOGETHER

Our strategic plan is built on a foundation of collaboration, reflection, and research. Over the past year, we engaged with players, families, coaches, staff, and Board members to understand our strengths, challenges, and opportunities as a club.

This process included surveys, interviews, and discussions with key stakeholders, as well as a comprehensive analysis completed by a team of eight MBA students from Wilfrid Laurier University, whose work helped shape the insights and direction that follow.

The result is a shared roadmap for the future — one that reflects the voices of our community and the aspirations of everyone who believes in Waterloo United.

At the heart of this plan is a renewed commitment to player development - so that every athlete, at every level, has a pathway to grow and achieve their personal goals. Our success will not be measured by wins or trophies, but by how many players we help reach their next level - whether that means moving from recreational to competitive play, advancing from youth to senior programs, learning another side of the game as a match official, or continuing their journey in post-secondary and professional environments.

The following Strategic Pillars and Goals outline the key priorities that will guide our growth and decision-making over the next three years. Together, they represent the future we can build - united in purpose, driven by quality, and committed to our community.

WATERLOO UNITED'S FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

PILLAR #1



PRIORITIZE
PEOPLE
DEVELOPMENT

PILLAR #2



FOCUS ON
COMMUNITY
IMPACT

PILLAR #3



RAISE THE
STANDARD
OF PLAY

PILLAR #4



OPERATIONAL
EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC PILLARS & GOALS

STRATEGIC PILLAR #1:

PRIORITIZE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

Our commitment to development extends beyond players. It includes coaches, staff, and the entire club ecosystem. This pillar focuses on empowering people to reach their potential through education, mentorship, and structured growth pathways. By investing in continuous learning and supporting smooth transitions from youth to senior levels, we ensure development will remain the heartbeat of Waterloo United.

Goal 1: Empower Coaches and Staff

- **Sub-Goal:** Implement Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and Annual Performance Reviews for technical and administrative staff.

- **Sub-Goal:** Offer/facilitate at least three educational workshops or opportunities per year for coaches.

- **Sub-Goal:** Establish a coach development model with resources and support to foster learning, growth and better age-appropriate coaching for players.

- **Sub-Goal:** Create opportunities that foster mentorship between experienced and emerging leaders (i.e. players to coaches, etc.)



Goal 2: Elevate Player Development Pathways

▪ **Sub-Goal:** Help Families Navigate Pathways: launch a post-secondary advisory program that includes helping families navigate decisions on what schools are a good fit for them as student-athletes and how to open communication with those programs.

▪ **Sub-Goal:** Improve transitions between key stages (U7 to U8, U12 to U13 and U17 to Senior Soccer) with targeted programs, events and player exposure opportunities (ie. Pre-Academy programs, Showcase events, etc.)

Goal 3: Promote Lifelong Involvement in Soccer

▪ **Sub-Goal:** Expand youth leadership and mentorship programs and opportunities to foster character development and mental health. (ie. Senior youth players assisting in skill centre)

▪ **Sub-Goal:** Create "player-to-coach" and "player-to-official" pathways to retain members beyond playing years and expand opportunities for people in the game.



STRATEGIC PILLAR #2:

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY IMPACT

Waterloo United is more than a soccer club - it's a community hub. Through this pillar, we aim to expand access to the game, deepen engagement with our City and Region, and celebrate the role soccer plays in strengthening connection and belonging. By building partnerships, removing barriers, and sharing our stories, we will create a club that reflects and serves the diverse community we represent.

Goal 4: Deepen Community Engagement and Impact

- **Sub-Goal:** Expand Access and Inclusion: launch enhanced financial assistance programs and outreach initiatives to reduce cost barriers.

- **Sub-Goal:** Expand Access and Inclusion: Develop partnerships with at least six local schools and organizations through a 'Soccer in Schools' program.

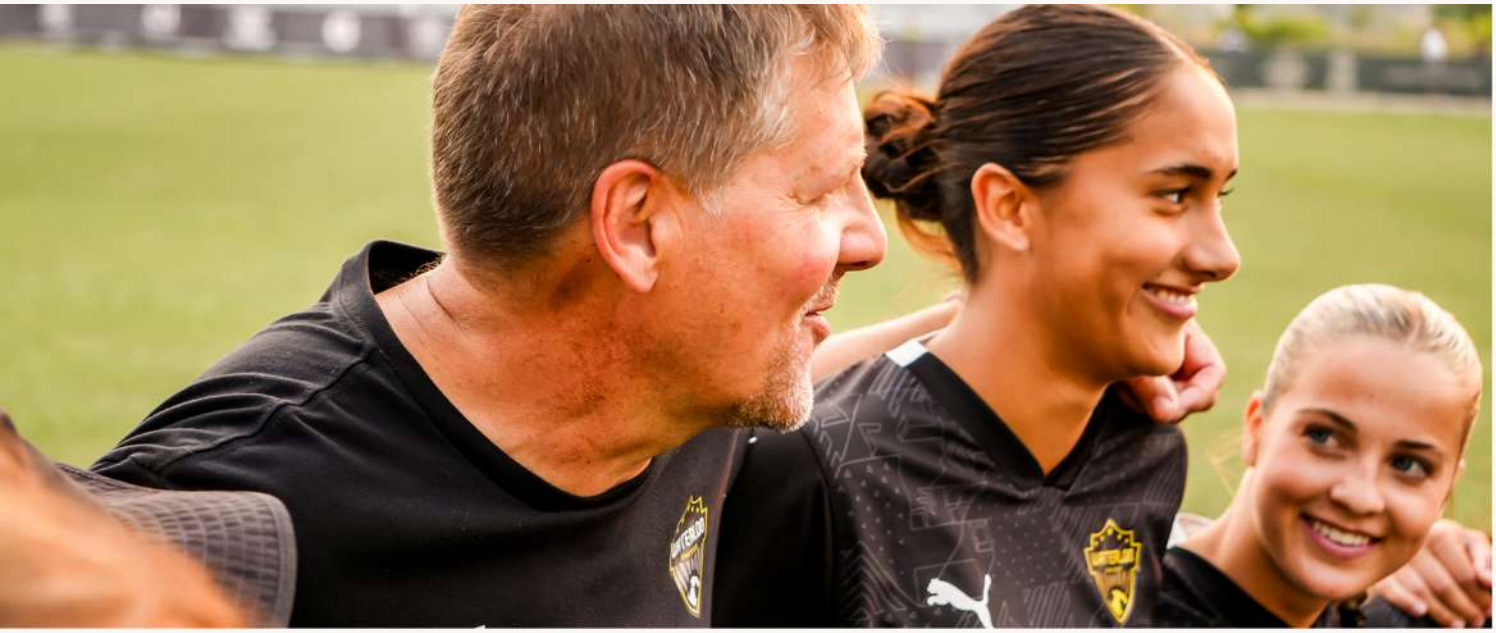
- **Sub-Goal:** Measure and Communicate Impact: Enhance data tracking systems to better understand the demographics we serve, the player and coach pathway, and more accurately measure and report our organization's impact.

Goal 5: Build Club Pride and Visibility

- **Sub-Goal:** Strengthen Club Pride: increase public presence through local media, digital storytelling, and digital content designed to engage more with members. This includes hosting public events and marketing initiatives in Waterloo.

- **Sub-Goal:** Strengthen Club Pride: establish a clear club identity and cultural framework to which all players, coaches, staff, parents and supporting stakeholders should commit.





STRATEGIC PILLAR #3:

RAISE THE STANDARD OF PLAY

Waterloo United's soccer identity is the foundation of how we play, coach, and grow. Through this pillar, we will define and implement a consistent philosophy and language of play rooted in passion, attitude, togetherness, and hard work. Our aim is to create recognizable standards on the field, where every player experiences a development-first environment - one that reflects our belief that it's the player's game.

Goal 6: Establish a Clear Soccer Identity and Language

- **Sub-Goal:** Define a Waterloo United Soccer Identity rooted in four pillars: Passion, Attitude, Togetherness, and Hard Work.
- **Sub-Goal:** Align all programs - from grassroots to high performance - under one clear language of play.
- **Sub-Goal:** Work with other soccer leaders in our Region to improve the standard of training, development and competition for aspiring young athletes in our community.

Goal 7: Champion Player-Centered Development at All Levels

- **Sub-Goal:** Reinforce a culture where player development comes first. Define clear organizational performance indicators that measure our success based on the success of our players.

- **Sub-Goal:** Continue to build on our technical soccer and sports science expertise to not only support player development, but remain a top National Youth Licensed club.

- **Sub-Goal:** Embed the philosophy of "the player at the heart of every decision" into all coaching and operational frameworks.

- **Sub-Goal:** Build a new grassroots player-development curriculum and program standards for the recreational pathway from U3 to U9.

- **Sub-Goal:** Launch a comprehensive Waterloo United Goalkeeper Academy as a regional centre of excellence. Position the club as the top destination for goalkeeper development in Ontario.

- **Sub-Goal:** Establish regular individual player review and assessment systems to monitor holistic growth and objectively show player progression.

STRATEGIC PILLAR #4:

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Behind every great program is a strong foundation. This pillar focuses on strengthening the club's internal systems, governance, facilities, and financial sustainability to ensure we operate with professionalism and transparency. By enhancing our infrastructure, communication, and accountability, we will create a stable, efficient, and future-ready organization capable of supporting growth at every level.

Goal 8: Strengthen Club Infrastructure

- **Sub-Goal:** Develop a long-term facility strategy for increased indoor field access, training hubs, and ensure equipment is up to standard and accessible.

- **Sub-Goal:** Share a clear plan for the club's Development Fund and how that will be used and replenished to support continual growth and advancement.

- **Sub-Goal:** Improve online systems and processes including the launch of a new website for effectively sharing information on programs, costs, and a more modern customer journey.



Goal 9: Achieve Financial Sustainability

- **Sub-Goal:** Diversify revenue through sponsorships, grants, and community-driven programs.

- **Sub-Goal:** Build a three-year financial model with reserves, contingency planning and assurance that all programs have long-term sustainability.

- **Sub-Goal:** Explore community partnership opportunities to create more effective and efficient ways to achieve common visions for soccer in Waterloo Region.

Goal 10: Enhance Governance & Communication

- **Sub-Goal:** Establish a Dispute Review and Disciplinary Committee to address complaints and behavioural issues in order to strengthen safeguarding measures.

- **Sub-Goal:** Implement a club-wide communication framework with clear roles and response-time standards.



THE WATERLOO WAY

The next chapter of our club will not be written by one person or one program - it will be written by all of us. Every coach, parent, player, volunteer, and partner has a role to play in shaping the future we want to see.

As we welcome our 55th anniversary, we stand at a defining moment for both our club and Canadian soccer. The foundation built by those who came before us has given us an opportunity - now it's our time to take advantage of it.

This plan is more than a document. It's a commitment to raise our standards, to put players first, and to work together with integrity and purpose. Our success will not be measured in championships or headlines, but in the growth of our people and the pathways we create for the next generation.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT - TO COLLABORATE, TO INNOVATE, AND TO LEAD.

Let's honour our past by building a future worthy of it.

Let's make Waterloo United a model of what community-driven, player-focused soccer can be.

Let's build something special together.