



## Climate Change and Environment Committee Agenda

April 16, 2026, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Conestoga Room

City of Kitchener

200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 407

People interested in participating in this meeting can email Committee Administrator, Eda Islemecioglu at [eda.islemecioglu@kitchener.ca](mailto:eda.islemecioglu@kitchener.ca). Please refer to the delegation section on the agenda below for the registration deadline. Written comments received will be circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and will form part of the public record.

\*Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. If you require assistance to take part in a city meeting or event, please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994.\*

**Co-Chair: Brooklin Wallis**

**Co-Chair: Amanda Di Battista**

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**Pages**

### 1. **Commencement**

The meeting will begin with a Land Acknowledgement given by the Chair.

The City of Kitchener is situated on the traditional territory of the Chonnonton, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

We recognize our responsibility to serve as stewards for the land and honour the original caretakers who came before us. Our community is enriched by the enduring knowledge and deep-rooted traditions of the diverse First Nations, Metis and Inuit in Kitchener today.

**2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

*Members of Council and members of the City's local boards/committees are required to file a written statement when they have a conflict of interest. If a conflict is declared, please visit [www.kitchener.ca/conflict](http://www.kitchener.ca/conflict) to submit your written form.*

**3. Delegations**

*Pursuant to Council's Procedural By-law, delegations are permitted to address the Committee for a maximum of five (5) minutes. All Delegations where possible are encouraged to register prior to the start of the meeting. For Delegates who are attending in-person, registration is permitted up to the start of the meeting. Delegates who are interested in attending virtually must register by 1:00 p.m. on April 16, 2026, in order to participate electronically.*

**3.1 Item 4.1 - M. Day, Executive Director, WR Community Energy**

**4. Discussion Items**

**4.1 Presentation - High Performance Development Standards, DSD-2026-137** 20 m 1

*The Delegations, and M. Balch, Planner (Policy) with the City of Kitchener, will provide a 5-minute presentation on this matter.*

**4.2 Private Tree Tools Review, DSD-2026-146** 30 m 4

*B. Steiner, Senior Environmental Planner with the City of Kitchener, will provide a 5-minute presentation on this matter.*

**5. Information Items**

**5.1 Sub-Committee Updates** 15 m

**5.1.a Sustainable Food Systems**

*A. Di Battista, A. Hohenadel, J. Phan, and P. Nojo, will provide a 5-minute sub-committee update.*

**5.1.b Committee/Council Report Template Change(s)**

*P. Boot and P. Nojo will provide a 5-minute sub-committee update.*

**5.1.c High Performance Development Standards**

*B. Wallis and J. Phan will provide a 5-minute subcommittee update.*

**5.2 Agenda Forecast to May 2025** 10 m

## 6. Adjournment

Shannon Lodenquai  
Committee Administrator

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

www.kitchener.ca

**REPORT TO:** Climate Change and Environment Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** April 16, 2026

**SUBMITTED BY:** Natalie Goss, Manager of Policy and Research, 519-783-8933

**PREPARED BY:** Mike Balch, Planner (Policy), 519-783-8928

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All Ward(s)

**DATE OF REPORT:** March 24, 2026

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2026-137

**SUBJECT:** High Performance Development Standards Program Update

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## RECOMMENDATION:

For Information with Waterloo Region Community Energy as delegation.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the High-Performance Development Standards (HPDS) which is in program development.
- The report highlights the reposition to a voluntary pilot program.
- There are no anticipated financial implications.
- This report supports **Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.**

## BACKGROUND:

WR Community Energy (WRCE) is a collaboration between the Region of Waterloo, the three area urban municipalities, and local utilities to implement the Community Energy Investment Strategy, which focuses on facilitating the energy transition across the Region.

The High-Performance Development Standards (HPDS) project was initiated in 2021, through WRCE's HPDS Working Group (formerly the Land Use and Energy Working Group). The group initially explored enabling land use policies and the viability of harmonized standards across the Region.

The HPDS is intended to be a set of design standards for new, Planning Act development applications submitted in the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich. These standards are being designed to embed the energy transition, environmental and infrastructure considerations, and climate resilience into the planning and approvals process to future-proof the

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community. These standards are a key way to support greenhouse gas reduction targets from TransformWR, as we plan for growth through to 2051.

In collaboration with area municipalities, WRCE has undertaken significant engagement with the development industry and the broader community to solicit feedback on the design of the HPDS. Feedback supported the development of the discussion draft that was released in the fall of 2024 with subsequent engagement in the winter of 2025 including presentations to the Climate Change and Environment Committee.

Following changes in Provincial direction in 2025, a revised approach to a voluntary, opt-in program was supported by the HPDS Working Group and regional CAOs earlier this year.

**REPORT:**

The HPDS will launch as a voluntary, opt-in, pilot program with a select cohort of developers across Waterloo Region in September 2026. Participating developers will have the opportunity to shape the future of high-performance developments in Waterloo Region while getting access to technical expertise and resources that help demonstrate potential cost savings, improved performance, and market differentiation in addition to direct application support and recognition programs.

The intent of this pilot program is to test HPDS targets and processes in real-world conditions, while reducing uncertainty and advancing capacity building within the development community. Participants of the pilot will be well-positioned as champions as the industry advances towards future standards at a local, provincial, or federal level.

The HPDS Pilot Program will be open to all developers in Waterloo Region. The cohort will be selected via an expression of interest process to ensure a mix of development types and geographic locations (e.g. low, mid- and high-rise; residential and non-residential projects; in urban and rural municipalities). The pilot will begin September 2026, and selected applicants will follow the process without obligation to reach the targets that exceed current municipal standards.

This approach is informed by feedback received from the broader community in 2025 that generally expressed a desire to advance high-performance standards and some in the development industry who expressed a desire for a voluntary program.

At this time, financial incentives are not available, however may be explored in a future phase of this work.

The standards are organized into three main categories:

1. Built Environment: To develop safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces.
2. Natural Environment: To support climate resilience through nature-based solutions, promote mindful resource use, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Energy Efficiency: To outline requirements for energy efficient and resilient developments.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports **Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.**

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

In 2024, WR Community Energy and the Region of Waterloo were successful in securing approximately \$500,000 through the Codes Acceleration Fund from Natural Resources Canada to support this work. No additional funds are required from the Region or area municipalities to support this project, therefore there are no direct financial implications.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – Substantial consultation to date including public engagement sessions, development industry meetings, and online resources ([EngageWR.ca](https://www.engagewr.ca)).

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- [DSD-2023-109](#) - Harmonized Green Development Standards Phase 2 Project Launch
- [DSD-2024-067](#) - Harmonized Green Development Standards Project Update
- [DSD-2024-267](#) - Waterloo Region High Performance Development Standards Engagement Launch
- [DSD-2025-120](#) – High-Performance Development Standards Discussion Draft
- Planning Act

**REVIEWED BY:** Janine Oosterveld, Manager of Customer Experience and Project Management

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

[www.kitchener.ca](http://www.kitchener.ca)

**REPORT TO:** Climate Change and Environment Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** April 16, 2026

**SUBMITTED BY:** Natalie Goss, Manager Policy & Research, 519-783-8933

**PREPARED BY:** Barbara Steiner, Senior Environmental Planner, 519-783-8947

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All Wards

**DATE OF REPORT:** March 31, 2026

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2026-146

**SUBJECT:** Tree Conservation and Management – Trees on Private Property

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## RECOMMENDATION:

For discussion.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to share the results of consultation with the community and the consulting tree industry regarding the regulation and management of trees on private property and to seek input from this advisory committee.
- Community engagement included a survey ([www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees](http://www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees)) which ran from February 16 to March 27, 2026 and a roundtable discussion with consulting tree industry on March 27, 2026.
- This report supports **Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.**

## BACKGROUND:

On January 10, 2022 staff presented report [INS-2022-002 Tree Canopy Target for Kitchener](#) to Council recommending approval of a tree canopy target of 30 percent for each ward by 2050 and an overall City-wide tree canopy target of 33 percent by 2070. For their consideration

Those targets were approved by Council and Council further directed staff to initiate a review of existing tree conservation processes in the City with an intention to improve tree conservation measures. In response, staff report [DTS-2023-161 Tree Conservation Processes Review](#) was prepared including a review of the tree conservation processes in Kitchener and other select municipalities. On February 16, 2023 and March 23, 2023 staff presented this information to Kitchener's Climate Change and Environment Committee (CCEC) with an opportunity for CCEC to review the findings and provide feedback to staff. On March 23, 2023 CCEC passed the following resolution:

\*\*\* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. \*\*\*  
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*That the Climate Change and Environment Committee support staff taking a report to the April 24<sup>th</sup> Committee of Council outlining existing tree conservation processes that conserve, manage and/or regulate public and private trees in Kitchener as well as in other relevant municipalities; and,*

*That the Climate Change and Environment Committee support initiating a second phase of the Tree Conservation Processes Review that includes consideration of specific enhancement opportunities to existing tools and processes.*

Since that time staff in the City's Forestry (public trees) and Planning (private trees) groups have undertaken:

- a review of the existing bylaws and processes regulating **trees on City property**, namely the [Kitchener Public Tree Bylaw](#) (✓ **Completed June/July 2025**, staff report [INS-2025 190 Updates to the Public Tree Bylaw](#));
- a review of the existing bylaw and processes regulating **trees on private property**, namely the [Kitchener Tree Conservation Bylaw](#); and
- a review of the [Tree Management Policy](#) which sets out a process to assess **trees on land undergoing an approval process** under the Ontario *Planning Act* (i.e. **development**).

#### **REPORT:**

The current facts on tree canopy and framework for protecting trees and canopy on **private property** in Kitchener are:

#### ***Kitchener's tree canopy***

- Kitchener's overall tree canopy has been determined to be:
  - 2015 = 26%
  - 2019 = 27%
  - 2025 = 26%
- **72% of Kitchener's existing tree canopy is collectively protected or regulated** through one or more of the following:
  - the Natural Heritage Conservation land use designation in the Official Plan,
  - the Natural Conservation (NHC-1) zone in Zoning By-law 2019-051,
  - the Region of Waterloo's Woodland Conservation By-law (woodlands 1 hectare in size or greater),
  - the Kitchener Tree By-law (trees on City property),
  - the Kitchener Tree Conservation By-law (trees on private properties 1 acre in size or greater).
- **28% of Kitchener's Tree Canopy is not protected or regulated.**

#### ***Current approach to protecting trees on private property***

- Protective land use in the Kitchener Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw for Significant Woodlands (see above)
- *Tree Management Policy* (Council-adopted, 2002) to guide the development of treed properties
- Tree Conservation Bylaw - applicable to trees 10cm DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) or greater AND located on a property 1 acre in size or greater

### **Who we have talked to**

- The community - through a survey ([www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees](http://www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees)) which ran from February 16 to March 27, 2026. The survey focussed on residents' thoughts on municipal regulation of tree removals through the current Tree Conservation Bylaw, and possible amendments such as application to smaller, and therefore more numerous, properties.
- Consulting tree professionals – These are the primary users of the City's Council-adopted Tree Management Policy which sets out the requirements for planning and designing new or re-development (under the Ontario *Planning Act*) on properties that have any trees >10cm DBH. A roundtable discussion was held in the afternoon of March 27, 2026 to discuss: which aspects of the policy are working; which can be improved; how to include and implement specific details for smaller (re-)developments in existing neighbourhoods; and how to more formally compensate for the loss of both trees and canopy cover.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

- This report supports **Cultivating a Green City Together: Focuses a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city; enhancing & protecting parks & natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future; supporting businesses & residents to make climate-positive choices.**

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Capital Budget – This report is For Discussion and has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – This report is For Discussion. Subsequent report(s) to Standing Committee may have an impact on the Operating Budget (staff resourcing).

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – Community engagement included a survey ([www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees](http://www.engagewr.ca/PrivateTrees)) which ran from February 16 to March 27, 2026 and a roundtable discussion with consulting tree professionals on March 27, 2026.

### **PREVIOUS REPORTS / AUTHORITIES:**

- [INS-19-008 Approval of Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy \(2019 – 2028\) & Implementation Plan](#)
- [INS-20-017 – Kitchener Urban Forest Canopy - Update](#)
- [INS-2022-002 Tree Canopy Target for Kitchener](#)
- [DTS-2023-161 Tree Conservation Processes Review](#)
- [INS-2024-477 Update on Urban Forestry Program](#)
- [INS-2025 190 Updates to the Public Tree Bylaw](#)
- *Municipal Act, 2001*
- *Planning Act*