

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Committee of the Whole

**DATE OF MEETING:** June 26, 2023

**SUBMITTED BY:** Garrett Stevenson, Interim Director of Planning, 519-741-2200 ext. 7070

**PREPARED BY:** Natalie Goss, Manager, Policy & Research, 519-741-2200 ext. 7648  
Garrett Stevenson, Interim Director of Planning, 519-741-2200 ext. 7070

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

**DATE OF REPORT:** June 22, 2023

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2023-295

**SUBJECT:** Housing for All Strategy Lived Expertise Working Group – First Year Review and Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study Update

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That the \$30,000 already committed to the operation of the Lived Expertise Working Group (LEWG) for year 2 from Kitchener's operating budget be allocated as outlined in DSD-2023-295; and,

That the City transfer \$23,600 to the SDCWR (Social Development Centre Waterloo Region) for year 2 costs in accordance with the Purchase of Services Agreement signed June 13, 2022; and further,

That staff, together with the facilitator of the Lived Expertise Working Group, report back to Council at the conclusion of the pilot program in 2024 on next steps for the LEWG.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Lived Expertise Working Group's (LEWG) first-year accomplishments and lessons learned and outline priorities for year 2 work. This report also provides an update on Kitchener's Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study
- The LEWG's first year priorities focused on developing a housing charter to work through jurisdictional barriers surrounding housing and supporting encampments throughout Kitchener. A large volume of work has been completed by the LEWG related to their priorities. Priorities for year 2 are in progress and part of ongoing conversations with Kitchener's Interim Director of Planning and Manager of Policy & Research.

- There are no new financial implications as \$30,000 is already committed to the operation of the Lived Expertise Working Group (LEWG) for year 2 from Kitchener's operating budget.
- This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting. The LEWG Year One Report (Attachment A) was prepared by the LEWG facilitator.
- This report supports A Caring Community through the City's commitment to recognize that stable, secure and affordable housing is a human right. Further, that the City will use equity, diversity and inclusion principles to realize the right to housing.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In December 2020 Kitchener Council approved Kitchener's [Housing for All](#) Strategy establishing a five-year strategy to realize the right to housing using the tools available to a local municipality. Priority 2 of the Housing for All Strategy is a commitment to Lived Experience Collaboration with the following actions:

- Recognize and treat those in need of housing or related social benefits as experts in what is required and able to positively inform the outcome of decision-making processes;
- Ensure knowledge of rights and provide access to relevant information and sufficient time to consult;
- Ensure meaningful participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of housing policies and decisions;
- Work with community organizations to proactively identify and eliminate socio-economic barriers to participation; and,
- **Create and implement a 2 year pilot project for staff to work with and learn from a Lived-Experience Working Group on addressing housing issues in the city, to gain advice on strategy implementation and monitor progress.**

A Lived Expertise Working Group (LEWG) was formed in early 2022. As part of the 2022 Housing for All update report to Council, staff outlined that future Housing for All workplans and reports would include the input of the Lived Expertise Working Group who is also responsible for measuring the success of Housing for All's implementation. This report provides an overview of the LEWG's first-year accomplishments and lessons learned and outlines priorities for year 2. This report also provides an update on Kitchener's Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study.

## **REPORT:**

### **Lived Expertise Working Group**

The Lived Expertise Working Group (LEWG), established in early 2022, completed the first year of its 2-year pilot project. Attachment A includes the LEWG Year One Report.

The LEWG has completed a large volume of work and has experienced several learnings through this work including success in using an empathy-based approach to working with each other, municipal staff and Kitchener Council. The LEWG is currently working with Kitchener's Interim Director of Planning and Manager of Policy & Research on priorities for year 2 and have indicated a commitment to continued dialogue with city staff on matters of shared interest related to housing such as tenant protections and applying a lived expertise lens to Kitchener's upcoming Official Plan review.

## Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study

In January 2023 Council resolved:

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT where existing rental housing cannot or will not be preserved, staff make recommendations on how the City can support the transitioning of displaced residents;

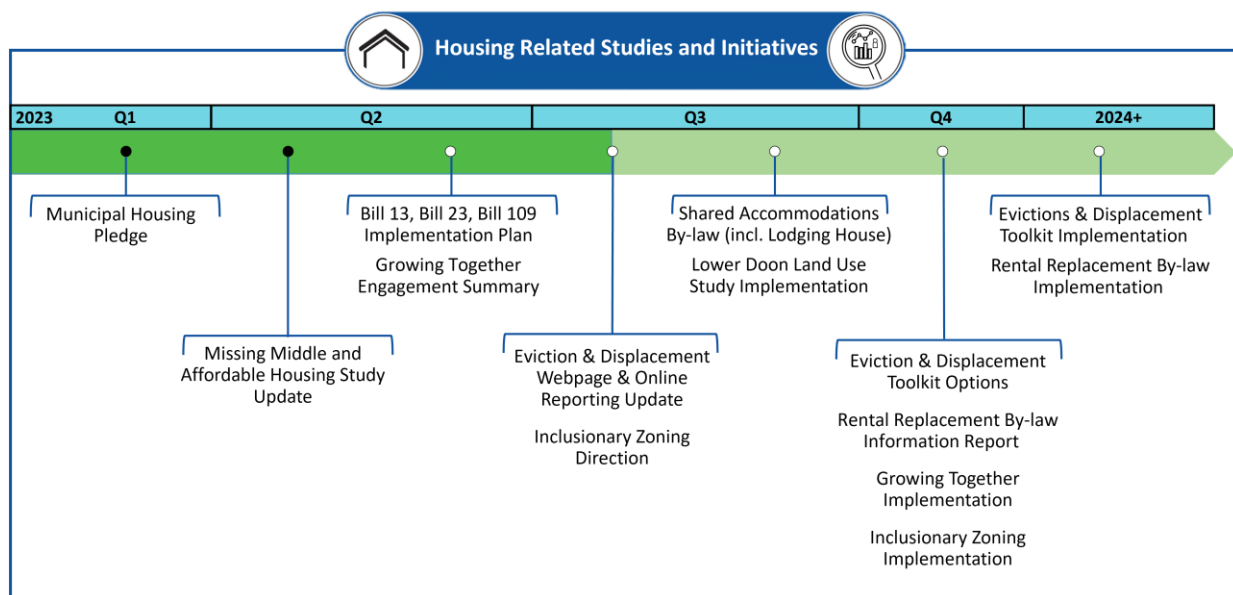
THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to review the rental replacement bylaws found elsewhere in Ontario to determine its benefits and its applicability in Kitchener;

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to work with Community Stakeholders to make recommendations and deliver on tools and best-practices that may be implemented immediately; tools that may require additional development, possibly as part of Kitchener's Official Plan review; and suggested advocacy to other orders of government where support may be outside of our jurisdiction and report back prior to the end of 2023;**

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be circulated to the Region of Waterloo and other local municipalities, should they choose to partner, and/or provide consistency -of -response to this growing challenge throughout our Region; and,

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT this resolution be circulated to the Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO)."

Kitchener’s Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study is among several housing-related studies and initiatives the City is currently undertaking (see figure below).



To date, as part of Kitchener’s Rental Housing, Eviction and Displacement Study, staff have prepared a draft website to share resources and sources of information on rental displacement and evictions for an easily accessible one window page of information for

those that have, are or may experience displacement. Additionally, a survey has been prepared to collect information from tenants who have been or will be evicted from their rental units because of the landlord's intent to demolish, renovate, convert, or occupy their rental unit. The purpose of this confidential survey is to help inform the City's understanding of the nature and magnitude of evictions and displacements occurring in Kitchener. The draft website and survey will be discussed with the LEWG at upcoming meetings following which they will be posted and shared. At this time, it is anticipated that the website and survey will be posted this summer.

And finally, staff are also in the process of retaining consultant services to better understand the financial feasibility of a rental replacement by-law.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports A Caring Community through the City's commitment to recognize that stable, secure and affordable housing is a human right. Further, that the City will use equity, diversity and inclusion principles to realize the right to housing.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget - Kitchener has committed contributing up to \$30,000 annually for the term of the 2 year pilot to help remove barriers to participation and to remunerate participants for their time and contributions. The Social Development Centre of Waterloo Region (SDCWR) is responsible to administer the remuneration process directly to participants. In year one, \$20,000 was paid by the City of Kitchener upon signing of a *Purchase of Service Agreement* with the SDCWR to pay for the following expenses; meeting compensation (\$12,960), nominating compensation (\$600), research & ad hoc projects (\$3000), travel stipend (\$1440), childcare stipend (\$1000), panelists (\$300) and an admin fee (\$700).

Funds administered by the City of Kitchener included training (\$4400), refreshments (\$3600), and computers and technology (\$2000).

SDCWR has requested that the City of Kitchener advance the year 2 funds in the amount of \$23,600 and that SDCWR arrange meeting refreshments directly. Staff have no objections to the revised budget allocation, and the total budget of \$30,000 is unchanged.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

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

COLLABORATE – The LEWG Year One Report was prepared by the LEWG Facilitator.

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

- [DSD-20-214 Housing for All – City of Kitchener Housing Strategy](#)
- [COR-2022-104](#) – Housing for All Program Update – 2022 Year in Review

**APPROVED BY:** Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services

**ATTACHMENTS:** Attachment A – Lived Expertise Working Group Year One Report