

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Planning and Strategic Initiatives Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** January 29, 2024

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rosa Bustamante, Director of Planning and Housing Policy/City Planner, 519-741-2200 ext. 7319

**PREPARED BY:** Adam Clark, Senior Urban Designer, 519-741-2200 ext. 7027  
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**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** Wards 9 & 10

**DATE OF REPORT:** January 11, 2024

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2024-005

**SUBJECT:** Growing Together – Protected Major Transit Station Area Land Use and Zoning Framework

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That City Initiated Official Plan Amendment OPA23/016/K/JZ, for the purpose of implementing a land use planning framework for seven of the City's Protected Major Transit Station Areas, including amendments to the Urban Structure, Land Use, Specific Policy Areas, and Cultural Heritage Resources mapping and text amendments, be adopted, in the form shown in the Official Plan Amendment attached to Report DSD-2024-005 as Attachment 'A', and accordingly forwarded to the Region of Waterloo for approval;

That City Initiated Official Plan Amendment OPA23/017/K/JZ, for the purpose of adding lands into the 2014 Official Plan and updating the land use planning framework for specific lands currently within Secondary Plans within the 1994 Official Plan, including amendments to the Urban Structure, Land Use, and Specific Policy Areas, inclusive of mapping and text amendments, be adopted, in the form shown in the Official Plan Amendment attached to Report DSD-2024-005 as Attachment 'B', and accordingly forwarded to the Region of Waterloo for approval;

That City Initiated Official Plan Amendment OPA23/022/K/JZ, for the purpose of deleting existing secondary plan policies and mapping from the 1994 Official Plan, be adopted, in the form shown in the Official Plan Amendment attached to Report DSD-2024-005 as Attachment 'C', and accordingly forwarded to the Region of Waterloo for approval;

That City Initiated Zoning By-law Amendment Application ZBA23/028/K/JZ to amend Zoning By-law 2019-051 for lands within seven of the City's Protected Major Transit Station Areas, be approved in the form shown in the "Proposed By-law" attached to Report DSD-2024-005 as Attachment 'D'; and

**That City Initiated Zoning By-law Amendment Application ZBA23/029/K/JZ to amend Zoning By-law 2019-051, for lands recommended to be removed from existing Secondary Plans be approved in the form shown in the “Proposed By-law” attached to Report DSD-2024-005 as Attachment ‘E’.**

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The primary purpose of this report is to provide a planning recommendation for the Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) within the Growing Together study area geography. This includes the following 7 of Kitchener’s 10 PMTSAs:
  - Grand River Hospital
  - Central Station (Innovation District)
  - Victoria Park & Kitchener City Hall
  - Frederick & Queen
  - Kitchener Market
  - Borden
  - Mill
- It is planning staff’s recommendation that the Official Plan amendments be adopted and that the Zoning By-law amendments be approved.
- There are no financial implications associated with this recommendation.
- Infrastructure capacity was assessed through early phases of this work and determined sufficient to accommodate medium term growth. Infrastructure capacity will continue to be monitored as the PMTSAs continue to welcome more people.
- Community engagement included:
  - 13 unique engagements totalling over 72 hours and involving more than 1,100 members of the community.
  - In-person workshops, pop-ups and walk-ins as well as regular updates and virtual engagement methods on the Growing Together EngageWR page.

This report is one of many housing-related reports considered by Council since Council’s endorsement of Kitchener’s Housing Pledge in March 2023, as seen in the diagram below.

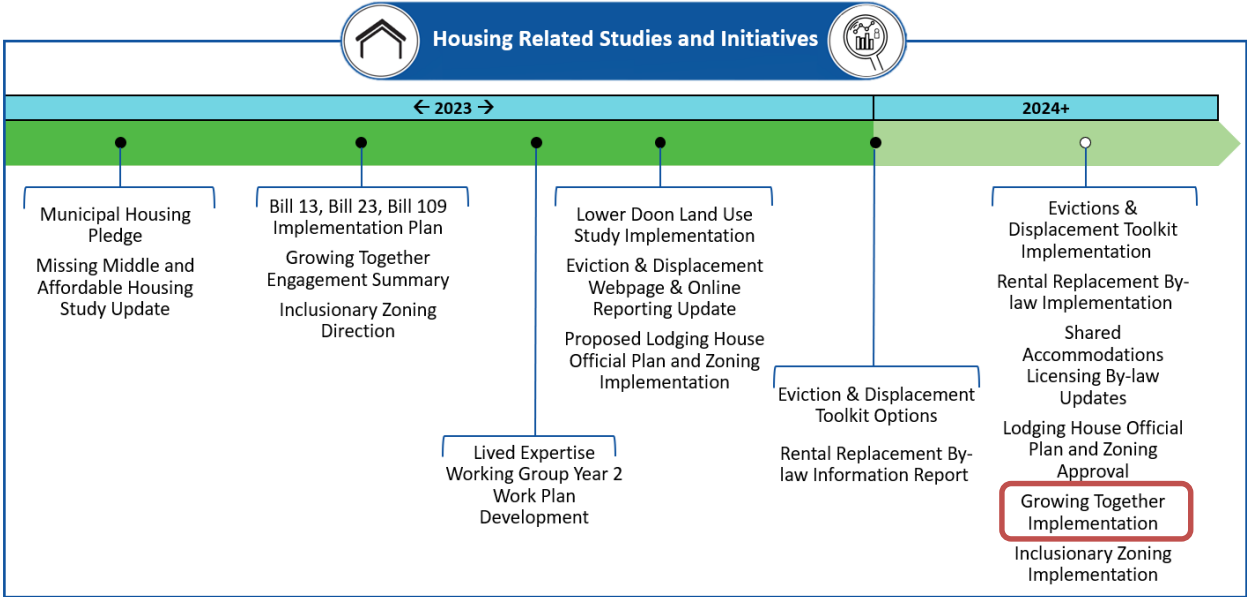


Figure 1 A diagram showing Kitchener’s housing related studies and initiatives.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments that will establish a new planning framework for development within strategic growth areas in Kitchener and implements that framework on lands within the Growing Together Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs). Lands outside of the PMTSA boundary but within historical central neighbourhood secondary plan areas are also being updated as part of this work.

Growing Together implements Kitchener's Municipal Housing Pledge and plans to accommodate 18,000 of Kitchener's target total 35,000 units by 2031 within the 7 of Kitchener's 10 PMTSAs that form the Growing Together geography. Additional growth capacity to an estimated minimum 60-year horizon has the potential to be accommodated within the Growing Together geography, largely on underutilized opportunity sites.

Growing Together also implements the following recommendation from the Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing report DSD-2023-160:

*“That the Enabling Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Feasibility Study be used to inform the Growing Together project for planning in Major Transit Station Areas and future updates to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law;”*

It does this through the removal of required parking minimums and by no longer regulating maximum density via Floor Space Ratio (FSR). These policy changes, as recommended by the study, will help unlock low-rise and mid-rise missing middle housing supply.

In place of FSR maximums, Growing Together proposes built-form regulations that have been carefully calibrated to enable a healthy long-term supply of housing and jobs while upholding a high quality of life for existing and future residents, workers, and visitors.

Growing Together implements the following recommendation from the Growing Together – Engagement Summary Report Overview report DSD-2023-251:

*“That staff use the community input as summarized in the Growing Together Engagement Summary attached as Attachment A to report DSD-2023-251 to inform continued work on Growing Together.”*

It does this through the proposed land use policies and zoning regulations, as detailed in Attachment G to this report (DSD-2024-05). Community feedback received at the 13 engagements, (including 6 community workshops, 3 pop-ups, 3 office hours engagements and an open house) was used to inform the land use and zoning mapping, the permitted uses within zones, the priority streets framework, and other proposed policies and regulations.

Growing Together represents a best-fit from over 1,300 conversations with community members and collaborators cultivated through a 4-time award-winning engagement process. It proposes an innovative and flexible structure that is custom designed to help address the housing crisis, perform in the complex and challenging environment of the City's PMTSAs, and plan responsibly for the future.

## BACKGROUND

### Why We Are Growing Together



Figure 2 A photo from the pilot workshop with the Downtown Community Working Group in January 2023.

The City has been working on an updated planning framework for the lands around the ION LRT since the initiation of the Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS) project in 2013.

When planning staff re-launched Kitchener's Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) planning work in early 2023, we named it Growing Together, with a purpose. All current and future Kitchener residents, workers and visitors, community builders and housing providers, City staff and council members are building our future *together*. We are experiencing growth and change *together* and navigating the housing crisis *together*, to make high-quality housing more abundant and affordable for all. We are addressing the climate emergency *together*, by building up around the ION and empowering people to walk, cycle, roll and take transit more often.

We are working together with other City divisions and departments, including Parks, Economic Development, Transportation, Engineering, Building, Communications, and others. This includes work to better understand and plan for sufficient ongoing infrastructure capacity to support growth and change. Growing Together is intertwined with other planning work, particularly inclusionary zoning, rental replacement, and downtown district energy.

We are working together with the Region of Waterloo to implement relevant portions of Regional Official Plan Amendment 6 (ROPA 6), including land use permissions that will help enable complete communities and missing middle housing.

We are working together with the Province of Ontario to meet Kitchener's PMTSA intensification minimums, the Housing Pledge target of 35,000 new units by 2031, and the objectives, regulations, and policies of the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and A Place to Grow.

We are working together with the federal government, through the Housing Accelerator Fund, to bring more housing online more quickly. Growing Together was a key component of Kitchener's Housing Accelerator Fund application, which resulted in \$42.4 million in federal funding.

We are working together with the development industry and housing providers, land economists, planners, architects, designers, and other collaborators to grapple with the complexities of building complete communities in this critical time.

But most importantly, we are working together with the Kitchener community through an equity-first engagement process that has allowed us to speak— at length, in detail, and in person— with over 1,100 community members from all walks of life.

We have met people where they are through 13 community engagements within the past 10 months. We have mailed residents and property owners a total of 36,716 postcards. Our website, [engagewr.ca/growingtogether](http://engagewr.ca/growingtogether), has been visited over 8,000 times. The materials posted on our EngageWR page have been downloaded over 4,700 times.

We have created innovative, industry leading, internationally recognized award-winning materials, tools and processes that help show clearly, realistically, and intuitively what growth and change looks like, how it occurs, why it is necessary, and who it impacts.

### **What Growing Together Does**

Growing Together is designed to achieve several objectives including:

**Aligning the City's PMTSA planning framework with the way growth is already happening.** This means more closely matching our policies and regulations to the kinds of development that are already being approved by Council through site-specific applications.

This helps provide more certainty for everyone—the community, the development industry, city staff and council—about how our PMTSAs will evolve, which:

- Helps us plan more accurately for the future, including better understanding our parkland and hard and soft infrastructure needs. Schools, community facilities and public transit are among the other things we will collectively be able to plan for more efficiently and sustainably.
- Reduces process and speeds up approvals, with fewer development applications requiring Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments to proceed, and delivering more housing, in a greater variety of forms, more quickly.
- Gives the community a better understanding of what future change might look like.
- Gives the City access to more tools and funding sources enabled by conformity with regional, provincial, and federal policies.

**Bringing pioneering methods to the complex challenges of station area planning.** This means being the first or among the first municipalities in the country to achieve things like:

- Designing and deploying a more equitable, interactive engagement process that also demonstrates to participants how their input has been evaluated and used to inform the proposed policies and regulations.

- Implementation of a PMTSA planning framework that translates the City’s Municipal Housing Pledge target directly into our policies and regulations and meets the objectives of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund.
- The implementation of new land uses and zones that are custom designed to perform in a PMTSA context, and with a sophisticated understanding of the current market.
- Zoning which permits a full range of missing middle housing forms and mix of uses, implements carefully calibrated built-form regulations to ensure good and compatible building design at appropriate densities, and eliminates vehicular parking minimums.

**Ensuring that as intensification happens, a high quality of life can be enjoyed by all.**

This means developing land use policies and zoning by-law regulations that protect for the health, safety, and quality of life of both existing and new Kitchener residents by:

- Using built-form zoning regulations such as building length and floor plate area maximums, as well as physical separation. These work in combination to protect the privacy of new residents, ensure access to light for all units, and provide “breathing space” between buildings much like yard setbacks do for single detached houses. It also limits shadow, wind and other impacts on existing and future nearby residents. Without these regulations, buildings can create significant effects on the surrounding environment and can impact the future development potential of nearby properties. This includes limiting how much total housing can be built if one development frustrates or neutralizes development on neighbouring sites.
- ‘Graduating’ built form requirements based on height ranges. This helps permit a full range of building types while mitigating impacts. As a building gets taller, the built form regulations change proportionally.
- Requiring amenity space as part of larger developments. This will create meaningful private and shared common spaces for new residents, visitors and others to enjoy.
- Built-form zoning regulations are a critical component of building a healthy, safe environment for all who live, work, and visit Kitchener’s PMTSAs, while still allowing for abundant housing supply. The following diagrams give an example of how the proposed zoning framework uses built-form regulations to guide density and maximize the total provision of housing at a high quality of life for all.

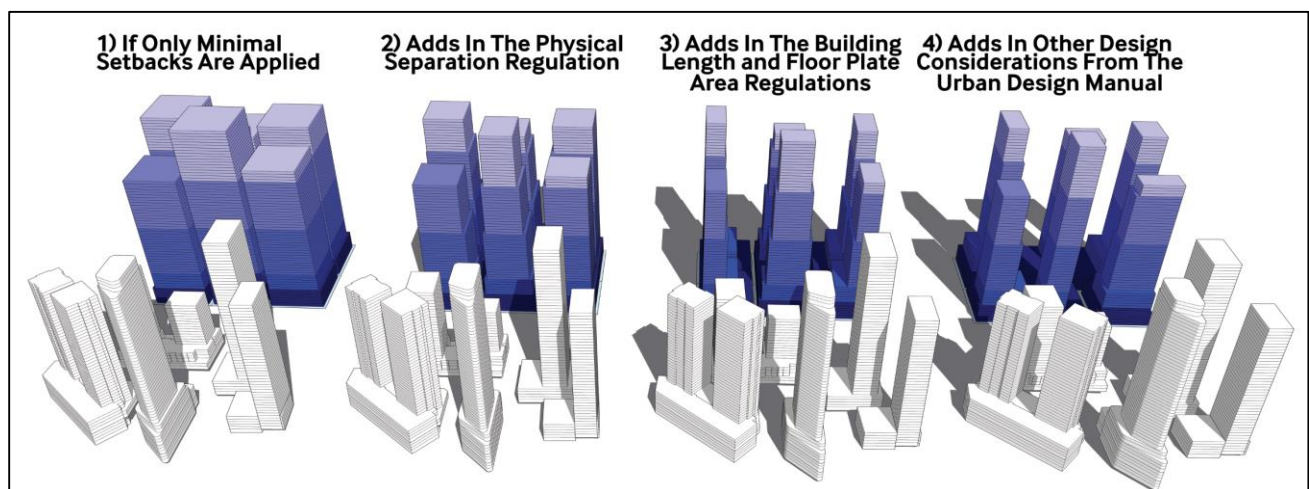


Figure 3 In the above diagram, the purple buildings represent a large block of high-density development in-line with the tallest and densest development approved and built in Kitchener, which are represented by the assembly of white buildings along the bottom. This diagram shows how the proposed built-form regulations guide density while ensuring a high-quality urban environment for existing and new community members.

**Planning for a more affordable and more sustainable future.** This means creating policies and rules that, over time, enable housing affordability and address the climate emergency by:

- Implementing Inclusionary Zoning in partnership with Growing Together, requiring affordable units as part of new development. The permissions in Growing Together help offset the negative financial implications of inclusionary zoning that could curtail new market housing supply.
- Providing for more pathways to a broader range of housing types across the full spectrum of the housing market, including missing middle and mid-rise housing.
- Planning for a downtown district energy system, which includes enabling sufficient density and mix of uses to support the investment over the long-term.
- Providing more housing and jobs around transit and active transportation options, which is critical in meeting Kitchener's greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Providing more housing and jobs that can be efficiently serviced with existing infrastructure, keeping the life-cycle costs of infrastructure low and causing fewer road disruptions over time. Over time, this has the potential to help keep property taxes lower than other forms of growth.

**Planning for greater equity for all.** Through our engagement plan, Growing Together committed to a more equitable community engagement process, creating methods and materials that made staff and our work more accessible and interactive than ever before. The feedback received has resulted in a planning framework that meets the full range of needs of current and future Kitchener residents, workers and visitors by:

- Providing opportunities for all types of housing, including singles, duplexes, triplexes, additional dwelling units (ADUs), multiplexes, and apartment buildings in low, mid, and high-rise forms. This greater mix will help support a broader range of family and household types and provide options for people to remain in their neighbourhood throughout the various phases of their lives.
- Allowing a range of uses in each zone to create more complete communities, with shops and services that meet people's daily needs within accessible distances.
- Encouraging home businesses, small businesses, and start-ups by permitting more uses in more zones which provides better opportunities for people's ideas to emerge, supporting employment and complete communities.

### **What Growing Together Is**

Growing Together continues the planning review process that began in 2013 with the Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS) plans and advanced through the Neighbourhood Planning Review (NPR) project through 2021.

Growing Together proposes a planning framework, which includes new land use and zoning for 7 of Kitchener's 10 PMTSAs:

- Grand River Hospital
- Central Station (Innovation District)
- Victoria Park & Kitchener City Hall
- Frederick & Queen
- Kitchener Market
- Borden
- Mill

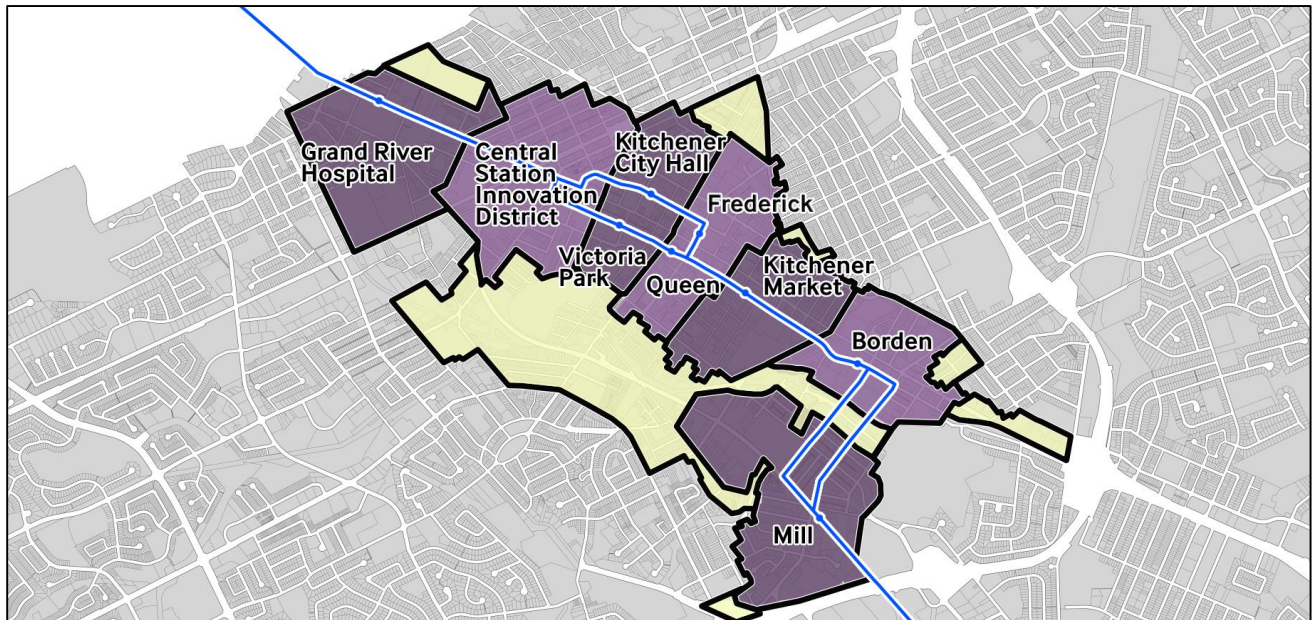


Figure 4 A map showing the 7 PMTSAs that form Growing Together.

Growing Together also contains the entirety of the Urban Growth Centre (UGC), or Downtown Kitchener. Lands outside of the PMTSA boundary but within historical central neighbourhood secondary plan areas are also being brought into a new and updated planning framework as part of this work (shown in yellow above).

Kitchener's PMTSA boundaries were determined by the Region of Waterloo and approved by the Province through ROPA 6. These boundaries are final and cannot be changed through the Growing Together process.

### **Growing Together Planning Analysis**

Growing Together has considered and implements several factors that are important and also required to be considered when recommending changes to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. This section provides an overview of what was considered and how the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments implement these factors. **A detailed planning analysis is contained within Attachment F.**

Note that the City's Official Plan for PMTSAs is to be updated within one year of the Minister's decision on Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 6, issued on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **Community engagement feedback**

Growing Together has considered community, collaborator, and agency feedback, which was received through:

- Over 20 PARTS and NPR engagements between 2013 and 2021.
- The 6 Community Workshops held in March and April 2023.
- The Missing Middle Block exercise, Priority Streets exercise, and Office Hours engagement held in June and July 2023.
- Walk-in Office Hours and Open House in November 2023.



## **The Planning Act**

The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments have regard for matters of Provincial interest outlined in the Planning Act including:

- The removal of density bonusing from the Official Plan. Both the existing and previously proposed draft planning frameworks for downtown depended on density bonusing to deliver housing units in downtown. That tool is no longer available.
- Limiting inclusionary zoning to PMTSAs only. Cities can only require affordable units through an inclusionary zoning by-law within PMTSA boundaries. If a greater share of housing is built in PMTSAs, more of our housing will be more affordable overall.
- Matters of Provincial interest.
- Required updates to conform with the Region of Waterloo's Official Plan, including Regional Official Plan Amendment Number 6.
- Required Official Plan policies for PMTSAs including minimum residents and jobs per hectare, establishing the ways that land can be used, and identifying minimum densities required.

## **The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020**

The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement by:

- Creating healthy, safe, and livable communities with a range and mix of housing options and complementary non-residential uses.
- Promoting the wise and efficient use of land and existing infrastructure through intensification and redevelopment around higher-order transit.
- Encouraging development within existing settlement area boundaries, which supports energy and natural heritage conservation and contributes to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

## **A Place to Grow, 2020**

The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments conform with A Place to Grow by:

- Establishing a planning framework that achieves the minimum required density targets of 160 residents and jobs per hectare in these PMTSAs and 200 residents and jobs per hectare in the Urban Growth Centre (Downtown Kitchener). Kitchener's Official Plan sets the minimum target for the UGC at 225 residents and jobs per hectare.
- Creating complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living by providing for a range and mix of housing types, jobs, and services at densities and in locations which support transit viability and active transportation.
- Prohibiting land uses and built form that would adversely affect the achievement of transit supportive densities and providing alternative development standards such as reduced parking requirements.

## Regional Official Plan

The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments conform with the Regional Official Plan, including Regional Official Plan Amendment Number 6 by:

- Incorporating Kitchener's PMTSAs as established through the Regional Official Plan and approved by the province into the urban structure of Kitchener's Official Plan.
- Establishing land use, height, and density policies for PMTSAs that supports the achievement of growth targets outlined in the ROP and Kitchener's Housing Pledge, supports climate change objectives, and optimizes the use of existing infrastructure including ION light rail.
- Directing the majority of forecasted population and employment growth to strategic growth areas including Downtown Kitchener and Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
- Creating new official plan policies requiring Kitchener to plan for complete communities and missing middle housing; and provide for a range and mix of housing within Kitchener's PMTSAs.

## Recent Decisions of Kitchener Council for Site-Specific Approvals

- Taking a consistent approach to carry forward site-specific regulations from applications approved by Council through Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments over the previous 5 years.

## Kitchener's Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study

[Kitchener's Missing Middle and Affordable Housing Study](#) was endorsed by Council in April 2023. Growing Together implements recommendations from this study by:

- Not requiring a minimum amount of vehicular parking. The cost of parking can be very high, and the space required to accommodate parking can prevent smaller, missing middle development from occurring at all. Parking can still be provided to meet demand, while people who don't need parking won't need to pay for it.
- Enabling flexibility for all types of housing by determining density through built-form regulations rather than floor-space-ratio maximums. This also makes development more consistent within PMTSAs, where properties come in all shapes and sizes.

## Kitchener's Municipal Housing Pledge

In March 2023, Council endorsed Kitchener's [Municipal Housing Pledge](#), which committed to adding 35,000 homes by 2031. Provincial funding provided through the Building Faster Fund is dependent on reaching this target, in stages over the next several years. Growing Together advances the commitments in the Municipal Housing Pledge by:

- Planning for 18,000 of those units within the Growing Together PMTSAs where there is significant demand for new housing and existing infrastructure to do so sustainably, responsibly, and quickly enough to help meet the target deadlines.

## **The Downtown Vision**

In 2022/23, through a community-led, staff-supported process, a new vision for Downtown Kitchener was created. This new vision was endorsed by Council in November 2023. Growing Together adds the new vision to the City's Official Plan, providing a connection between the vision and how it will guide the future of downtown through land use planning.

Staff also piloted the 3D model workshop with the Downtown Community Working Group, and their feedback can be found in the Workshop Engagement Summary in Attachment G.

## **Heritage Conservation Districts and Cultural Heritage Landscapes**

A detailed assessment of the proposed Official Plan amendments and Zoning By-law amendments as they relate to cultural heritage resources was provided [in a report to the Heritage Kitchener](#) committee and presented on January 9, 2024 (DSD-2024-009).

In 2014, Kitchener completed a Cultural Heritage Landscapes Study that inventoried and recommended 55 cultural heritage landscapes throughout Kitchener. Growing Together includes the delineation of 14 cultural heritage landscapes located wholly within the PMTSAs in the Official Plan, enabling heritage related studies to be requested through development application processes.

Additionally, a series of policies are proposed to be included in the Official Plan to implement recommendations from the Cedar Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Study that recognize and facilitate views into and out of the neighbourhood. Finally, a policy is proposed to be added to confirm that where there is a conflict between the Official Plan and a Heritage Conservation District Plan that the Heritage Conservation District Plan prevails.

The proposed land use and zoning changes are not anticipated to result in loss of cultural heritage resources. The existing heritage tools currently in use—including Heritage Conservation District Plans, and the policies within them, provide guidance on how development should occur, designation, and the ability to request heritage studies in certain situations – remain in effect.

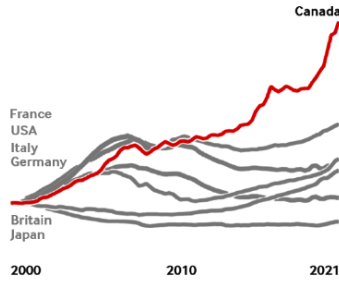
## **The Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS) Plans for Midtown, Central and Rockway**

The PARTS plans included a wide range of key directions, which have been used together with new legislation and evolving community needs since 2013 to inform the proposed Official Plan policies and zoning framework for Growing Together.

## **Additional Considerations**

**Housing Affordability.** Like many Canadian cities, Kitchener has been impacted by a housing affordability crisis. Growing Together is proceeding in partnership with the Inclusionary Zoning By-law, which will require affordable housing units as part of new development (refer to report DSD-2024-029). Growing Together also creates more pathways to a broader range of housing supply. New infill development has been shown through multiple academic studies to lower the cost of housing within a neighbourhood, in both the short and the long term.

### Real House Prices



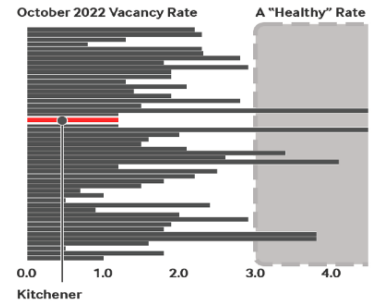
Housing prices in Canada far exceed those of other G7 nations and are more than 3x higher than the 2000 average.

### Mortgage Payments



The average mortgage payment increased by 40% in just 2022, and by well over 200% since 2016.

### Vacancy Rate

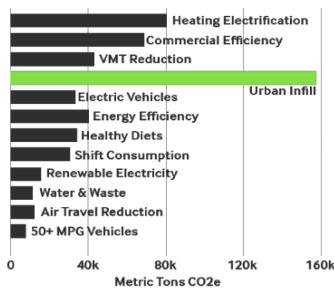


CMHC reports Kitchener's vacancy rate at 1.2%, far below a 'healthy' vacancy rate of 3%-5%

Figure 5 Cards from the [Growing Together card deck](#). On the left, the graph shows how rapidly housing costs have increased in Canada compared to other countries. The middle graph shows how rapidly mortgage payments have increased since 2016. On the right, the graph shows Kitchener's vacancy rate compared to other Ontario cities. Links to the studies referenced above can be found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

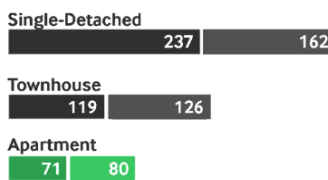
**Sustainability.** Kitchener City Council declared a climate emergency in June of 2019. Research shows that policies that encourage intensification via infill development, particularly along transit, are by far the most impactful policies a city can implement to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Further, Growing Together supports the downtown district energy project by locating density where it can be serviced by a potential future district energy plant (refer to staff report DSD-20-151).

### GHG Reduction Potential



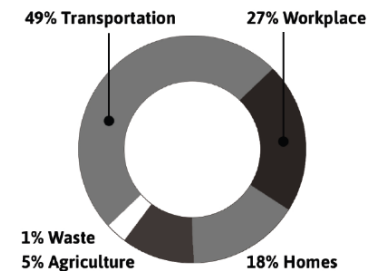
Researchers analyzed 700 cities and found that infill housing policies have by far the biggest impact on GHGs.

### Household Energy Use



Total energy use is lowest for apartments. The left bar represents energy used by the building, the right for transportation.

### GHG Emissions



In 2015, nearly half of all emissions in Waterloo Region were caused by driving/transportation.

Figure 6 Cards from the [Growing Together card deck](#). On the left, the graph shows how much potential impact urban infill policies can have on GHG reductions. The middle graph shows how much energy use is used by the building and for transportation for different types of housing. On the right, the graph shows a breakdown of Waterloo Region's GHG emissions.

## How We're Growing Together



Figure 7 A photo from our March 25th community-wide workshop at the Kitchener Market.

With the arrival of the ION light rail and the evolving needs of our community, change is occurring more quickly and in new ways within Kitchener's PMTSAs. With this real change came a responsibility to evolve our engagement methods to:

- Help the community break down the complexities of how growth and change are occurring through intuitive, easy to access and understand tools.
- Base those tools in the real-world by studying building typologies, development trends, and market conditions.
- Provide opportunities for community input to be captured, analysed, and quantified.
- Create a process that reaches a more equitable cross-section of community members by making our engagements accessible, fun, intuitive and rewarding.

### **What Growing Together Prioritized**

The Growing Together process was intentionally designed to be:

- **Equitable:** To reach a more diverse and representative set of community members.
- **Educational:** To create intuitive exercises using realistic buildings and parameters.
- **Measurable:** To collect community input that can be analyzed and quantified.

### **Where We Started**

In March 2023, through a series of hands-on workshops, planning staff engaged with the community to develop scenarios for growth that are tied to various real-world targets and needs. A presentation explaining the workshop is available [here](#).

Participants were asked to place an additional 18,000 housing units on the model, represented by low, mid, and high-rise building typologies that were 3D-printed in bright yellow. This number of new units aligns with Kitchener's housing pledge target for growth, in forms that align with recent, under construction and planned developments in the area. A full explanation of the methodology used is available [here](#).

While working through the exercise, participants discussed their thought process around where they placed different building types, helping staff better understand their priorities.

For those interested in going into greater depth about a particular issue, staff also prepared a 'card deck' of 24 visualized facts on growth, development and housing, available [here](#).

After each workshop, the results were translated exactly into a smart modeling software that allowed staff to measure and evaluate the results. Heat maps of the building placement from each workshop were created and layered on top of one another to create a unified community map for how to distribute different forms of growth. Those maps were used to inform the proposed distribution of land uses and zones in the final recommendations. Those results are summarized in our engagement summary, in Attachment G, and were presented to Council on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 with the [Growing Together – Engagement Summary Report Overview, DSD-2023-251](#).

**Through these workshops, staff met with 562 community members across 34 hours of engagement.** We mailed residents 10,598 postcards, posted an advertisement in the Record on March 17<sup>th</sup>, published a news release on March 9<sup>th</sup>, and notified people via our EngageWR page, social media and email.

## Where That Led



*Figure 8 Staff in conversation with two groups; on the left is the missing middle block exercise, and on the right is the priority streets mapping exercise.*

Building on the workshops, staff released a [Draft Approach to Growth and Change](#) in June 2023, which has been downloaded over 1,000 times. This included initial direction on zoning, mapping, and more. In our Draft Approach, staff introduced the following key principles:

- That Growing Together maximizes our ability to address the housing crisis by improving housing choice and affordability in our PMTSAs.
- That Growing Together addresses the climate emergency by creating transit-supportive communities, maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, and leveraging potential new infrastructure such as district energy.

- That Growing Together encourages a gradual modal shift to active transportation and transit, within complete communities that provide for people’s daily needs.
- That Growing Together helps bring more people, activity, life and diversity to Kitchener’s PMTSAs, with more amenities, shops and services for all. This principle is also reflected in the Downtown Vision work that was ongoing concurrently, ultimately resulting in a vision centered on vibrancy, connection and belonging.

To achieve these key directions, staff introduced new zoning categories: the Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) zones. This responded to feedback received during the workshops and subsequent analysis of the conditions present within PMTSAs; staff heard a clear desire for a simplified, more consistently applied zoning approach, but also one that accounts for the many unique opportunities and challenges of developing with PMTSAs.

## What Came Next



*Figure 9 A photo from the missing middle block exercise taken during RibFest on July 19<sup>th</sup> at our Gaukel Block Pop-up engagement.*

As part of our June/July 2023 engagement, staff developed two additional engagement exercises based on questions that had surfaced during our March 2023 workshops. These were the Missing Middle Block Exercise and the Priority Streets Exercise.

During the June/July 2023 engagement period, staff popped-up on Gaukel Street as part of both the Multicultural Festival and Downtown Kitchener Ribfest. We also attended Summer Series, a regular afternoon and evening event on Wednesdays at the Kitchener Market, and offered Office Hours appointments to the community and collaborators, where people could meet one-on-one with staff.

Feedback received at these events directly informed the types of uses and regulations proposed for the SGA-1 zone, as well as the locations and policies for priority streets.

During our summer engagement, staff also heard from the community on our approach and continued to refine our draft materials from there. The results of this phase of engagement were used to inform our draft materials, which were released in November 2023.

**In June and July, staff met with 322 community members across 25 hours of engagement.** We notified people via our EngageWR page, social media and email. The greatest priority of this engagement was to ‘go where the people are’ by appearing during evening and weekend hours at already-popular summer events.

### **An Award-Winning Process**

The Growing Together engagement process has received four awards to date:

- A Smart50 Award, an international award honouring the year’s 50 most transformative smart projects. At the Smart Cities Connect conference in Denver in May 2023, Growing Together was announced as one of the top-3 projects overall.
- A 2023 Excellence in Municipal Systems award by the Municipal Information Systems Association of Ontario.
- Honorable mention at the 2023 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Canada Core Values Awards
- A finalist for the World Smart City Awards in the Infrastructure and Building project award category. Smart City Expo World Congress is the world’s biggest and most influential event on urban innovation.



*Figure 10 Logos of the four organizations that have awarded the Growing Together process.*

### **First Draft – Fall 2023**

In November 2023, staff published draft materials to [engagewr.ca/growingtogether](https://engagewr.ca/growingtogether), which included:

- Community Guide to Land Use and Zoning
- Community Brief to Land Use and Zoning
- Draft Official Plan Amendment
- Draft Official Plan Mapping
- Draft Zoning By-law Amendment
- Draft Zoning Mapping
- Summer 2023 Engagement Summary

This included detailed Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations. The final draft recommended Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments can be reviewed further in Attachments A through E of this report.



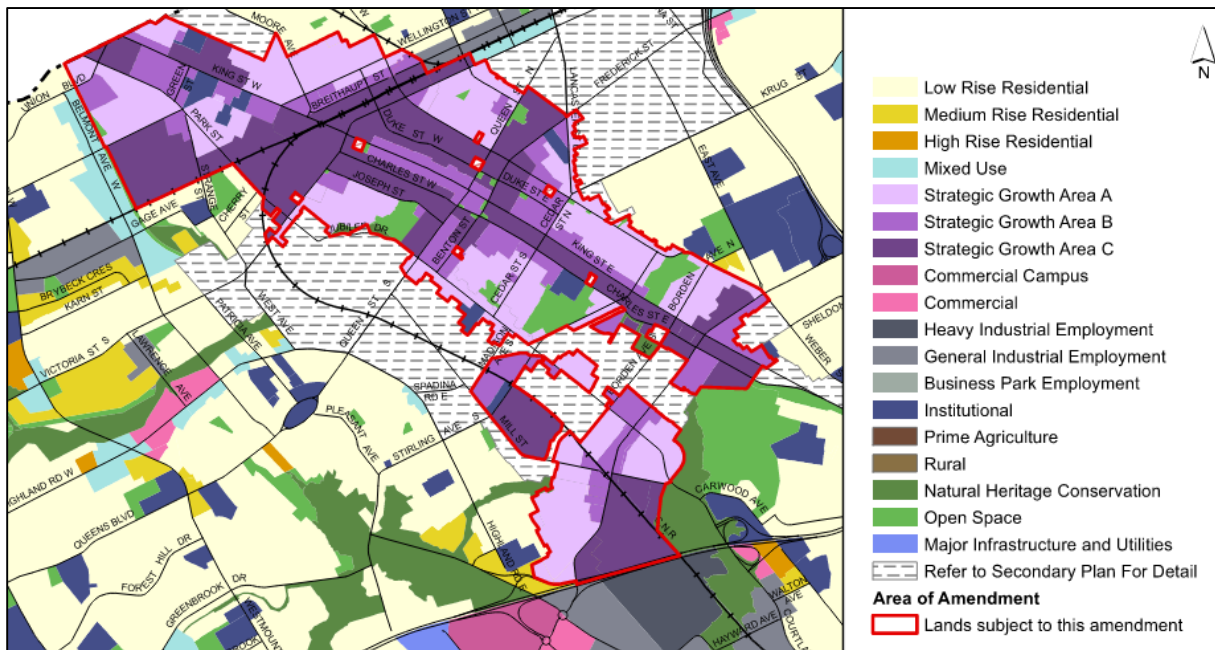


Figure 11 Proposed land use map. For illustrative purposes only.

**Highlights of the draft Official Plan Amendment include:**

- The delineation of all 10 of Kitchener’s PMTSAs and associated updates to urban structure policies.
- Establishing 3 new land use categories, Strategic Growth Areas A, B, and C, for the Growing Together PMTSAs to guide growth and change within these areas.
- Incorporating the new community-developed vision for downtown Kitchener into the Official Plan.
- A flexible approach to enable changes in land use and zoning which ensures that important criteria like compatibility, lot suitability, adherence to built-form regulations, and consideration of cultural heritage resources are addressed. The following diagram demonstrates the flexibility of the proposed land use and zoning approach, enabling multiple pathways to different forms of development while adding certainty into the process for all community members and collaborators:

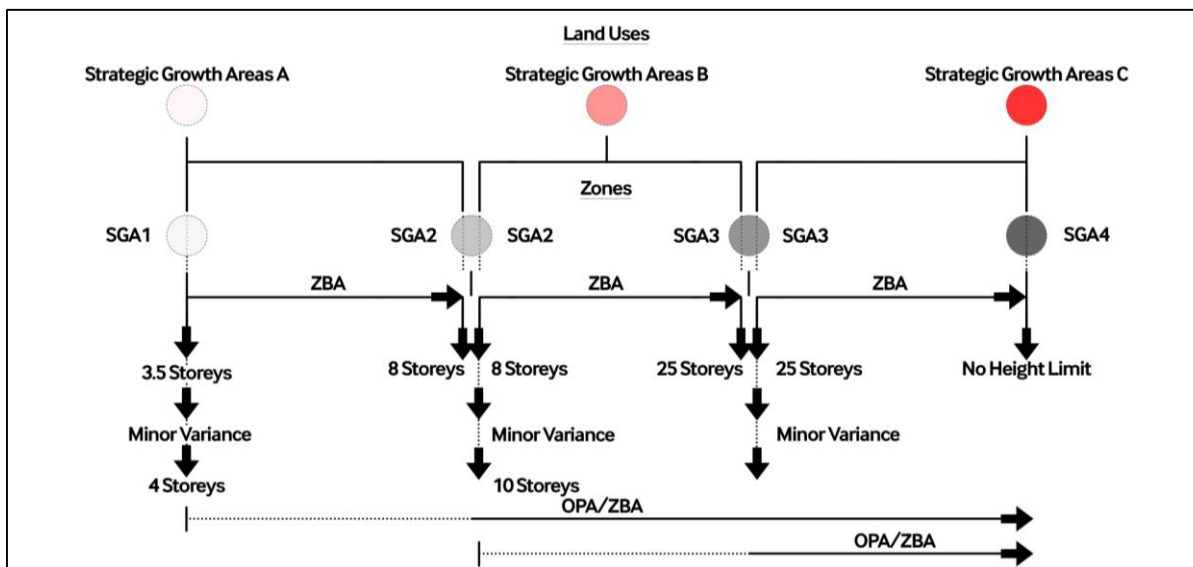


Figure 12 A diagram showing the many available pathways enabling changes in land use and zoning.

- The delineation of 14 cultural heritage landscapes and associated policies.
- The introduction of Priority Streets. Priority streets are street segments within PMTSAs whose primary purpose is to connect LRT and other transit with key destinations, cultural facilities and community spaces through enhanced streetscape design that prioritizes walking, rolling and cycling. Priority streets help achieve this through regulations requiring active uses on the ground floor of buildings and a minimum percentage of windows along the street while reducing some setback requirements to encourage a consistent or continuous streetwall. The following map shows the Priority Streets identified for the Growing Together PMTSAs:

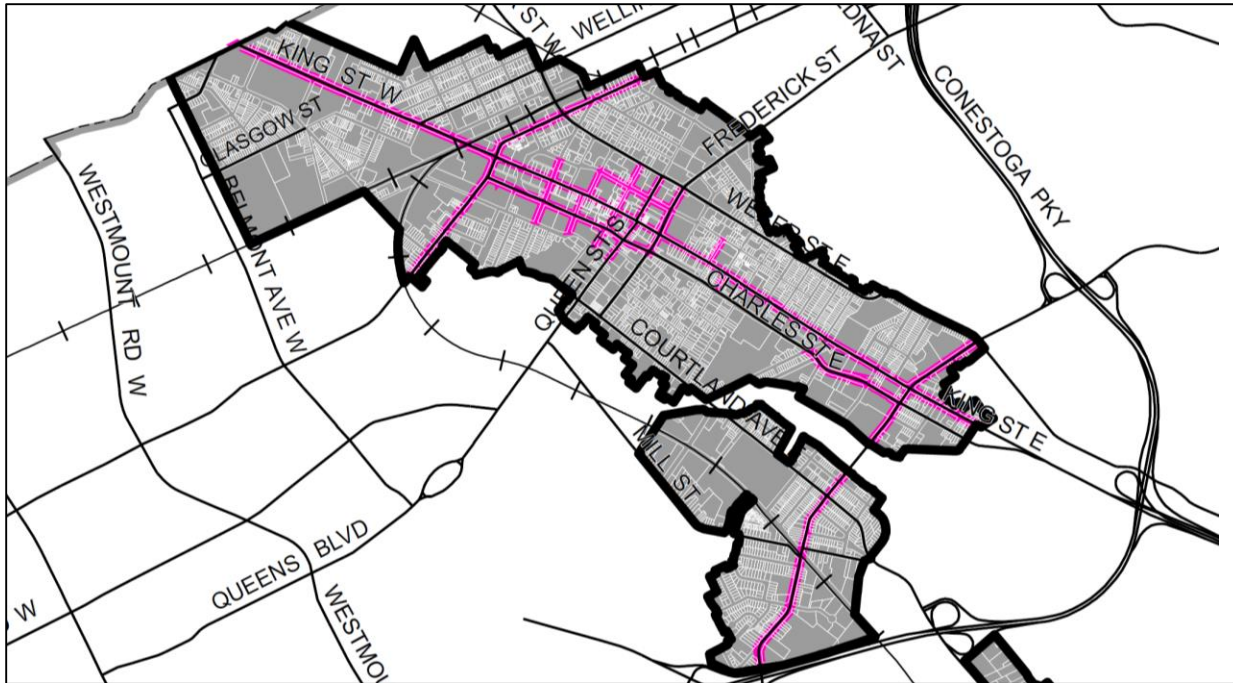


Figure 13 A map of proposed priority street segments.

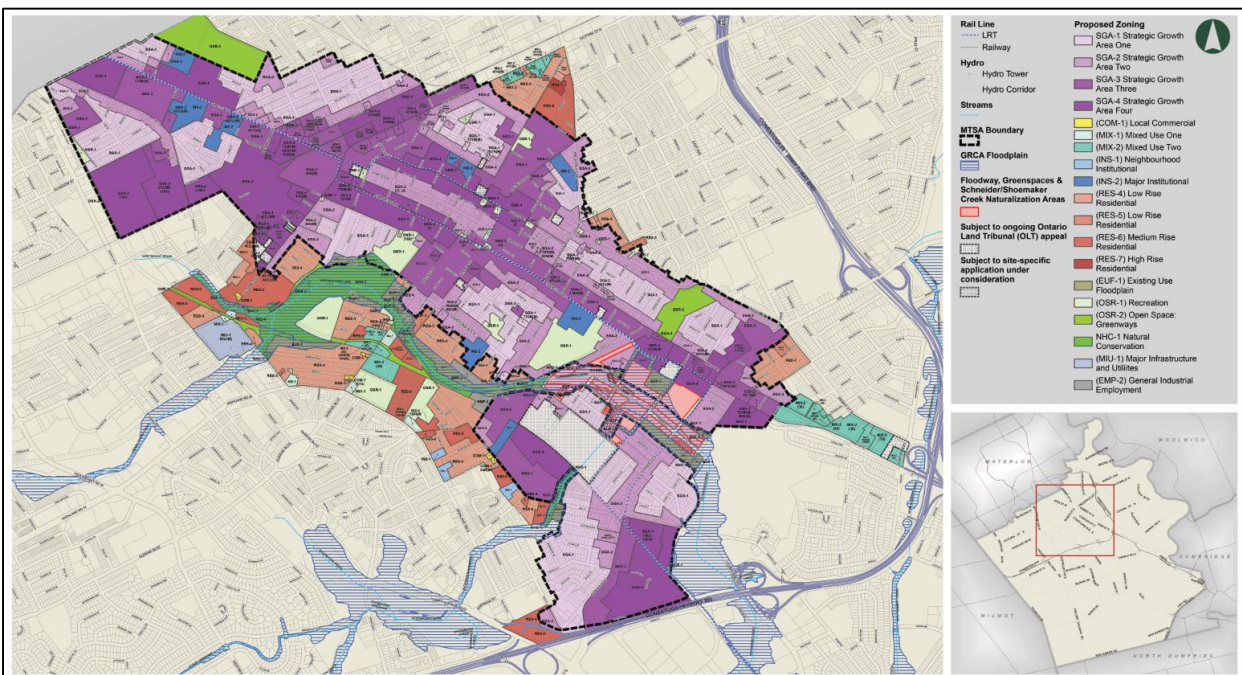


Figure 14 Proposed zoning map. For illustrative purposes only.

**Highlights of the draft Zoning By-law Amendment include:**

- Four new zones; SGA-1 (low-rise), SGA-2 (mid-rise), SGA-3 (a high-rise with limited heights), and SGA-4 (high-rise without a height limit). These zones have been designed to meet the complex needs of infill development within PMTSAs.
- Minimum densities are defined using floor-space-ratio (FSR), and maximum densities are defined through built-form regulations such as height, maximum building length, maximum floor plate areas and minimum physical separation between buildings.

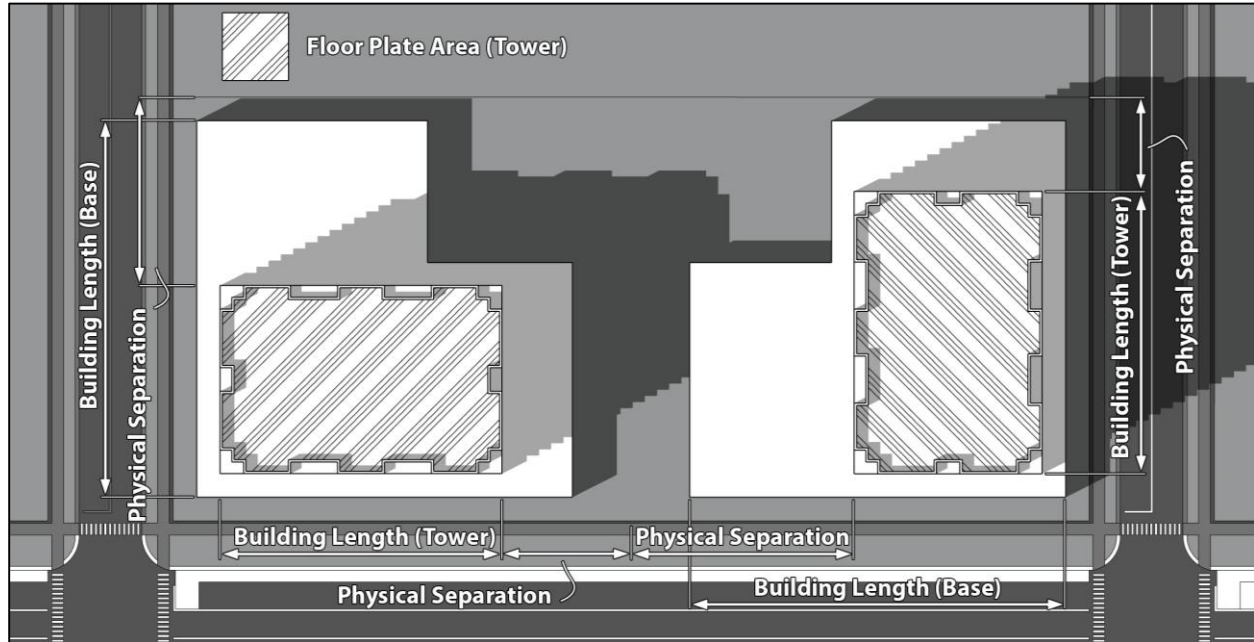


Figure 15 A diagram that demonstrates in plan how built form regulations are used to shape building design.

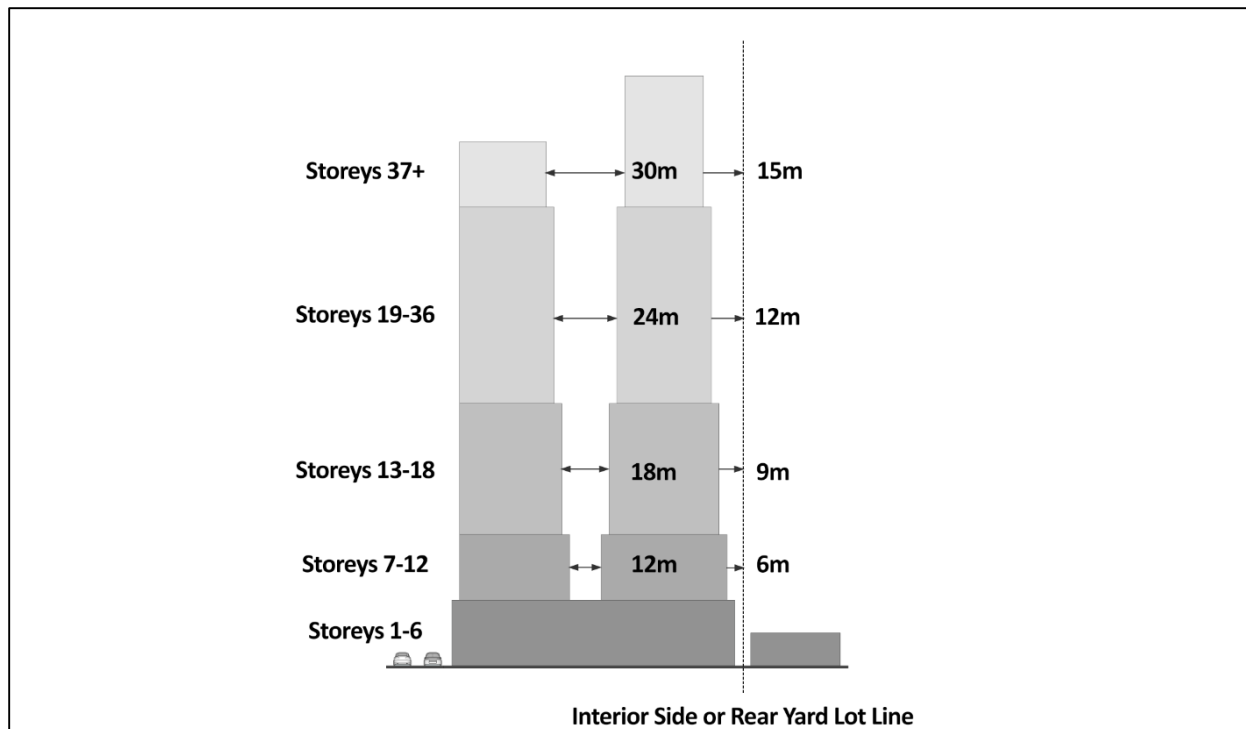


Figure 16 A diagram that demonstrates in elevation how physical separation is used to ensure a healthy, safe environment for building occupants and surrounding community members.

- These regulations more closely align with real-world built outcomes. This is critical in complex, built-up areas with land parcels of all shapes and sizes, dimensions, and configurations, as it helps create more certainty around the scale and size of building forms than an FSR-based density approach. Built-form regulations include:
  - Transitional regulations between taller buildings and low-rise buildings.
  - Limits on building length and floor plate area tied to different height ranges, to ensure the impacts of tall buildings are managed as they get taller.
  - Physical separation requirements between taller buildings, to allow for access to sunlight as well as privacy and a high quality of life for all residents, both within new developments and in existing surrounding areas.
  - Many of these built-form regulations are adapted from Kitchener's Tall Building Guidelines, adjusted to work within the framework of a zoning by-law.
- No minimum required vehicle parking. Requiring more parking than necessary adds substantial cost to development, forces some people to pay for parking they don't use or need, and can create 'induced demand' for personal vehicle use, negatively impacting the City's ability to meet GHG reduction goals.
- Regulations for SGA-1 and SGA-2 zones that are tailored to the needs of missing middle and mid-rise housing development. These regulations will help make a range of smaller-scale housing options more viable.

These materials were followed by continuing community and collaborator engagement through the month of November 2023. This included two walk-in office hour engagements where staff answered questions and had conversations with community members, as well as a workshop at the Kitchener Market, where we returned with the 3D-printed model to loop back with the community on how our engagements were used to inform our draft materials.

**In November 2023, staff met with 250 community members across 13 hours of engagement.** People were notified via the project EngageWR page, social media, and email. 13,059 postcards were sent to all residents and property owners in the area. The open house was advertised in The Record on October 27, 2023.

Staff also presented to and obtained input from the following Kitchener advisory committees:

- Kitchener Development Liaison Committee on November 17, 2023
- Economic Development Advisory Committee on November 22, 2023
- Downtown Action Advisory Committee on November 23, 2023
- Active Transportation and Trails Advisory Committee on December 12, 2023
- Mayor's Advisory Council of Kitchener Seniors on January 4, 2024
- Heritage Kitchener on January 9, 2024.

The materials posted in November 2023 also included a detailed [Community Guide](#) and a shorter [Community Brief](#) which helped explain in plain language how the draft materials were developed and what they meant. These guides have been downloaded over 700 times.

**In total, through the community engagement in 2023, staff have met with 1,134 community members across 72 hours of engagement.** Including other collaborators, staff have met with more than 1,300 people across more than 100 hours of engagement.



Figure 17 A photo from our November 18th engagement at the Kitchener Market.

## **List of Community Engagements**

Table 1: Location and Number of Participants at Public Engagement Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group/Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>March 21 2023</b>	Focused Community Workshop, Mid-rise and High-rise Residents	Kitchener City Hall Rotunda	60
<b>March 23 2023</b>	Focused Community Workshop, Low-rise Non-multiple Residents	Kitchener Public Library Central Branch	75
<b>March 25 2023</b>	Community Wide Workshop	Kitchener Market	370
<b>March 27 2023</b>	Community Wide Workshop	Stanley Park Community Centre	25
<b>March 30 2023</b>	Community Wide Workshop	Forest Heights KPL	20
<b>April 4 2023</b>	Focused Workshop, Low-rise Multiple Residents	Downtown Community Centre	12
<b>June 24 2023</b>	Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Festival	Gaukel Street	159
<b>July 15 2023</b>	Downtown Kitchener Ribfest and Craft Beer Show	Gaukel Street	95
<b>July 19 2023</b>	Summer Series at Kitchener Market	Eby Street	58
<b>July 21 2023</b>	Staff Office Hours	Kitchener City Hall	10
<b>November 14 2023</b>	Walk-in Office Hours	Mill Courtland Community Centre	20
<b>November 18 2023</b>	Open House	Kitchener Market	200
<b>November 20 2023</b>	Walk-in Office Hours	Downtown Community Centre	30
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,134</b>

## **How Growing Together Has Evolved**

Growing Together was designed to adapt to changing conditions and to respond to community and collaborator feedback. From the workshops inviting the community to share their thoughts on growth and change, to the Draft Approach proposing new zones that are shaped to meet a variety of needs, to the many tweaks and adjustments made to the final draft amendments based on community and collaborator feedback, Growing Together has been shaped, re-shaped and adjusted in many ways over the past year:

- During the engagement that followed the November 2023 draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments (comments can be found in Attachment J), staff received several submissions requesting that site-specific regulations be applied to a particular property. However, it is generally not in the project scope to apply new site-specific regulations that would be better justified through site-specific, applicant-initiated development applications. The new base zones have been carefully calibrated to create a balanced and mix of all community and collaborator perspectives.
- Staff received comments requesting changes based on assumptions about the types of people who would live in certain kinds of buildings. Zoning is a tool that is used to regulate uses of land, not the people that use land. As such, changes to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are not recommended to address these comments.

The proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments include the following changes from earlier iterations in consideration of the matters outlined in this report:

- Adjustments to the built-form transition regulations to make mid-rise development more viable and to provide additional transition between low-rise and high-rise zones.
- Adjustments to specific built-form regulations, with small increases to some floor plate area maximums and building length for taller buildings to encourage more purpose-built rental buildings, larger unit sizes, and more units with 3-bedrooms.
- Changes to the non-residential uses proposed in the SGA-1 zone, to create greater consistency with the permitted non-residential uses in the MIX-1 and COM-1 zones.
- Zoning has been adjusted to a higher zone category on several properties in response to various submissions based on additional information provided to address all required matters outlined in draft Official Plan policy 15.D.2.5 (i.e. proof of lot ownership for the subject properties, a design concept demonstrating conformity with the regulations of the requested zone and a scoped planning justification addressing all other matters outlined in proposed Official Plan Policy 15.D.2.5).
- Additionally, zoning has been adjusted to a lower zone category where property owners requested such a change with further consideration by staff on the planning merits of the request and broader feedback received from our equity-based community-wide engagements.

The following holding provisions are proposed to be applied based on collaborator and agency feedback:

- Requirement for a Record of Site Condition, applied to 81 properties,
- Requirement for an aeronautical assessment for all properties zoned SGA-4, to determine maximum building heights until such time as the Region of Waterloo International Airport Master Plan is updated and implemented through a Federal Airport Zoning Regulation as necessary.

- Requirement for a Sanitary Capacity Analysis applied to 36 properties zoned SGA-4, where a large increase in permissions is proposed relative to the draft Neighbourhood Planning Review zoning tested in the City's sanitary capacity model.

**For the reasons outlined in this report, staff recommend that the proposed Official Plan amendments and Zoning By-law amendments attached to this report be adopted/approved as they conform to Provincial policies and plans, are consistent with the Region of Waterloo's Official Plan, as amended, are consistent with Kitchener's Official Plan, and represent good planning.**

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- Municipal Act, 2001
- Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13
- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
- A Place to Grow, 2020
- Regional Official Plan
- City of Kitchener Official Plan, 2014
- City of Kitchener Zoning By-law 2019-051
- Growing Together – Engagement Summary Report Overview DSD-2023-251
- Downtown Kitchener (DTK) Vision and Growing Together Workshop DSD-2023-197
- Neighbourhood Specific Urban Design Guidelines DSD-2021-92
- Statutory Public Meeting Neighbourhood Planning Review DSD-19-252
- PARTS Rockway Plan CSD-17-100
- PARTS Midtown Plan CSD-17-090
- PARTS Central Plan CSD-16-015

**REVIEWED BY:** Natalie Goss, Manager, Policy & Research

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

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment A – Proposed Official Plan Amendment (PMTSA lands)
- Attachment B – Proposed Official Plan Amendment (non-PMTSA lands)
- Attachment C – Proposed Official Plan Amendment (removal of secondary plans)
- Attachment D – Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (PMTSA lands)
- Attachment E – Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment (non-PMTSA lands)
- Attachment F – Planning Analysis
- Attachment G – Engagement Summaries
- Attachment H – Waterloo Region Record Open House Notice (October 27th, 2023)
- Attachment I – Waterloo Region Record Statutory Public Meeting Notice (January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024)
- Attachment J – Public Comments since November 3, 2023 and November Engage Summary