

REPORT TO: Climate Change and Environment Committee

DATE OF MEETING: June 20, 2024

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WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Wards

DATE OF REPORT: June 3, 2024

REPORT NO.: DSD-2024-267

SUBJECT: Waterloo Region High-Performance Development Standards – Engagement Launch

RECOMMENDATION:
For discussion.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is twofold. First, the report informs the Climate Change and Environment Committee (CCEC) with an update on the project to establish a harmonized green development standard across municipalities in Waterloo Region, in particular, the launch of the community engagement. Second, it seeks initial feedback from the Committee regarding areas of focus for the standard to inform the first draft.
- The key finding of this report is that community engagement has been initiated and will continue at various stages until a decision in 2025. The project team will provide updates to the Climate Change and Environment Committee at key milestones for their input.
- There are no financial implications to this report.
- 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:

In 2021, WR Community Energy formed a Land Use and Energy Working Group with the purpose to integrate energy considerations into the planning process. The City of Kitchener was a founding member. In 2022, the group established a subcommittee to study the impacts of establishing a green development standard for cities in Waterloo Region. The subcommittee currently includes representatives from the Region of Waterloo, all three Cities, Enova Power Corp., GrandBridge, and Kitchener Utilities. In the spring of 2023, the three Cities and the Region of Waterloo reported back to their respective Councils to launch Phase 2. Kitchener City Council unanimously endorsed proceeding with a harmonized

approach advancing a standard (refer to DSD-2023-109). Concurrently, WR Community Energy invited to the Region's four townships to participate in this harmonized approach. All four rural municipalities have now joined the subcommittee creating a unique opportunity in Waterloo Region to establish a harmonized standard across the region's seven urban and rural municipalities.

Since that time, WR Community Energy in collaboration with the subcommittee received a grant from Natural Resources Canada to fund this work. Additionally, a Community Energy Planner staff position was established, and recruitment undertaken to act as the project lead to coordinate the overall work plan, consultant work, community and industry engagement and preparation of the draft standards, as well as support the future training and implementation roll-out.

REPORT:

This report provides a summary of the launch of the project's community engagement program this spring and seeks feedback from the Climate Change and Environment Committee on areas of priority for a harmonized standard.

Project Status and Timeline. Key project timelines established through the work plan include the following:

- Spring 2024: Engagement launch to garner initial feedback (On-track);
- Fall 2024: Engagement on the first draft of the standards and supporting policies;
- Spring 2025: Engagement on a revised draft of the standards and supporting policies to prepare for decisions among each municipality later in 2025; and,
- Spring 2026: Anticipated implementation including staff and industry training.

Project Identity. The harmonized green development standard has now been titled Waterloo Region High-Performance Development Standards, which, coupled with the logo will identify the project throughout the program development and implementation stages.

Spring 2024 Community and Industry Engagement Launch. The community engagement strategy launched at the end of May and includes the following for the initial phase of engagement:

Initial community engagement includes:

- May 30: [engageWR webpage](#) which was launched which will include an online survey
- June 1: A booth at tri-Pride's Summerfest in Victoria Park, Kitchener
- June 11: A booth at [SDGtalks & Shop](#) from 3 to 8pm at the SDG Idea Factory and Goudies Lane, Kitchener
- June 22 and 23: A booth at the KW Multicultural Festival in Victoria Park, Kitchener
- June 26: Community Education and Design Workshops from 3:00 to 4:30pm and 7:00 to 8:30pm. Locations of the two workshops will be confirmed and information provided on engageWR.

The project team has partnered with Climate Action WR to host the community engagement booths throughout the spring and summer. Additional locations in other parts

of the region will be added once confirmed. All engagement dates will be posted on the engageWR and shared through social media. Members of the community and development industry are encouraged to subscribe to the page to receive updates on upcoming engagement opportunities and project milestones.

Initial industry engagement includes:

- June (various dates): Discussions at municipal Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association (WRHBA) Liaison Committees in Waterloo, Cambridge and Waterloo Region as well as Kitchener's Development Liaison Committee which includes both WRHBA and as well as commercial/high rise developer representatives.
- June 25: Tentative industry engagement session

The project team will gauge industry interest in establishing a working team for more in-depth discussions on the draft standards in the next phase of engagement.

Purpose of the Initial Engagement. The purpose of the initial round of engagement includes:

- Informing on the purpose and intent of the standards and their application; and,
- Seeking feedback on priorities among potential focus areas that will inform the first draft this fall.

The overall approach to the High-Performance Development Standards is to make it harmonized, simple, effective:

- **Harmonized:** consistency across local area municipalities in the region to support its integration into development review.
- **Simple:** Make it easy for developers and municipal staff.
- **Effective:** Support the region's climate action goals and other sustainability objectives.

The project team has grouped potential areas of priority into the following categories for engagement purposes (Table 1). The project team does not anticipate that all categories listed below will be included in the first version of the standard.

Table 1. Potential categories for high-performance standards

Built Environment	Energy Efficiency	Environment and Green Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electric vehicle parking and charging infrastructure• Active and public transportation• Exterior lighting• Building resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy efficiency• District energy• Embodied carbon• Renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trees and plants• Waste• Water efficiency• Stormwater• Local food• Bird friendly design• Education

Additional categories may be incorporated in future versions consistent with other municipalities with established standards (e.g., Toronto Green Standard is currently version 4). Attachment A provides examples of existing policies, guidelines or standards locally along with other Ontario municipalities that have high-performance development standards for background information.

Questions for CCEC:

- Considering the overall approach to the High-Performance Development Standards, which categories should be prioritized in version 1?
- Which categories should be considered for future implementation?
- Are there any other metrics/areas of focus that should be considered?

Kitchener's representatives on the project team will continue to update and seek feedback from CCEC throughout this project. Staff anticipate the next update to this committee will occur later in 2024 with the release of the first draft of the High-Performance Development Standards.

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 – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

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

CONSULT – This report outlines initial engagement opportunities for the community and development industry.

COLLABORATE – Community Education and Design Workshops and development industry engagement encourages collaboration.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- DSD-2023-109 Harmonized Green Development Standards Phase 2 Project Launch
- DSD-2024-067 Harmonized Green Development Standards Project Update
- *Municipal Act, 2001*
- *Planning Act*

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Examples of high-performance development standards and related policies