

# Rockway Centre Redevelopment Strategy

April 22, 2024

Community Infrastructure Services Committee

# Background

- The Rockway Centre needs to be replaced
- City needs to build a modern older adult centre that meets the needs of residents
- Building a new older adult centre to replace Rockway is a lengthy process

# Previous Council Direction

- **2013**

“Begin the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the redevelopment of the Rockway Centre (736 Charles Street East | 1405 King Street East) into a medium-to-high density residential building that includes a ground floor older adult/community centre (to be operated by the municipality with the option to own), as well as possible ancillary medical/dental, retail or office type uses.”

- **2015**

City Council added \$6M to the 10-year capital forecast in 2024/2025 to be used to fund the City’s portion of the redevelopment partnership.

- **2019**

Leisure Facilities Master Plan – “Pursue a partnership with the private sector to redevelop Rockway Centre into a medium to high density residential building that addresses the heritage value of the property and includes a ground floor older adult community centre (to be operated by the municipality with the option to own), as well as possible ancillary medical/dental, retail and office type uses.”

# 2023 User Group Engagement

- Staff met with 144 individuals from key user groups, including:
  - Rockway Centre Advisory Council
  - Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)
  - Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener Seniors (MACKS)
  - Key user groups (i.e., FRIENDS)
  - Neighbourhood Associations operating out of Rockway (Eastwood, Auditorium)
  - Facilities management staff
  - Community centre and Program staff at Rockway Centre

# Key Findings from 2023 User Group Engagement

1. User groups reported feeling more open and receptive to working with the City to redevelop the facility (than previous attempts). There is greater trust between volunteers and staff.
2. Users are open to rebuilding the centre on the current site OR at a new location nearby.
3. Users emphasized the need to make accessibility a key objective of any new facility – e.g., proximity to transit, larger elevators, accessible washrooms, curb pick-up.

# 3 Phased Redevelopment Strategy

## Phase 1: Issue Request for Information (RFI)

- Helps City gather info and get a preliminary sense of interest from potential partners
- Information gathered will inform the next two phases

## Phase 2: Community Engagement

- Engagement with key user groups and older adults
- Focused on identifying the City's requirements / must-haves for potential development

## Phase 3: Request for Proposal (RFP)

- RFP will be a competitive bidding process
- Prior to issuing the RFP, Council will have an opportunity to provide input on City's requirements
- Staff believe there is potential to find a partner given the significant growth and development occurring in that general area of the city

# Timeline

Redevelopment Strategy presented to Community & Infrastructure Services Committee for approval to proceed	April 22
Phase 1 – Issue RFI	May 2024
Phase 2 – Community Engagement	June – August 2024
Phase 3 – Issue RFP	2025
Council update on RFP result	Before Summer 2025

# Summary

## A more modern and accessible older adult centre

- The current Rockway Centre building and site does not meet the needs of Kitchener's aging population and needs to be replaced with more accessible and modern amenities.

## Partnerships

- The 2019 LFMP recognized that partnerships with the school boards and private organizations are becoming increasingly important for municipalities.

## Innovative process

- Staff believe there is potential to build an innovative, mixed-use facility that will meet the needs of older adults.



# Questions