



**WE
ARE
KITCHENER**

KITCHENER'S 2023-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN





TERRITORIAL acknowledgement



The City of Kitchener is situated on the traditional territory of the Neutral, 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, Métis and Inuit in Kitchener today.

We give this acknowledgement to show respect to the first peoples who inhabited this land and to remind ourselves of our responsibility to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

OUR COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

The City is committed to responding in a meaningful way to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. We believe that this work begins with developing meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and Rights Holders, and recognize that this work will take time, as we strive to deliver concrete actions. We look forward to supporting and celebrating Indigenous Peoples in Kitchener and working with others to provide important services through the actions embedded in the City's Strategic Plan.



A MESSAGE

from Mayor Berry Vrbanovic and City Council

Building a city for everyone where, together, we take care of the world around us – and each other.

Welcome to Kitchener's new 20-year vision and 2023 – 2026 strategic plan!

As your Mayor and City Council, this plan reflects what you told us. It is a shared vision for our community and our Council over the next 20 years and a roadmap for this four-year term of Council. This plan reflects what will become our shared story, the story of Kitchener, from now until 2043.

We would like to thank the many people who shaped these plans, including residents and businesses, advisory committees such as Compass Kitchener, and staff working at all levels of our organization. Through this process, we gathered public feedback through a telephone survey of more than 1,000 residents, conducted 'street team' interviews with dozens of people and drew online engagement from many more residents over the course of a year. For the first time, we even recruited 36 community-spirited volunteers from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences to form a 'Plan WITH Us' resident panel. Over many months, so many of you helped us learn about the issues important to you, as you made meaningful contributions to this strategic plan.

We believe there has never been a more exciting time to be part of Kitchener's story. Together, we will work collaboratively with all of you to make our shared hopes, dreams and aspirations for our caring community, a continued reality.



WARD 9
Debbie Chapman

WARD 1
Scott Davey

WARD 2
Dave Schnider

WARD 6
Paul Singh

WARD 8
Margaret Johnston

MAYOR
Berry Vrbanovic

WARD 4
Christine Michaud

WARD 10
Aislinn Clancy

WARD 3
Jason Deneault

WARD 7
Bil Ioannidis

WARD 5
Ayo Owodunni



In 2023, the City opened a first-of-its-kind entrepreneurship hub to support businesses working to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in meaningful ways. The SDG Idea Factory enables entrepreneurs, community leaders and like-minded individuals to innovate, collaborate and activate the 17 SDGs in ways that help build a stronger Kitchener, a stronger Canada, and a stronger planet.

United Nations **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** Goals

In 2015, world leaders from UN member states, including Canada, adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality, confront injustice and tackle climate change by 2030.

The UN SDGs outline how to achieve a better and more sustainable future where no one is left behind. Based on leading global research, input from political representatives across the globe, hundreds of non-governmental organizations, and civil society - they identify key factors that contribute to prosperity, inclusion, and sustainability.

The City of Kitchener is committed to supporting the implementation of the SDGs in Canada and internationally. The SDGs are global, but with a local lens, and we are doing our part to contribute to their success. All the SDGs have targets directly related to the responsibilities of local and regional governments through our delivery of direct programs and services. The five goal areas in this strategic plan support making local progress toward the SDGs.

We will measure the economic, social, and environmental impacts of what we do as a city, and openly communicate progress aligned to the SDGs throughout the life of this strategic plan. Kitchener will submit this work and its outcomes to the Canadian government and the United Nations as a voluntary local review, which will assess and recognize progress in localizing the global SDG agenda and increase local innovation and dialogue around sustainability.



We are KITCHENER in 2043

Whether you've lived in Kitchener your whole life, or you have just arrived, you belong here. Kitchener is a city of people who, since 1854, have worked together to chart a progressive future, building a thriving city that offers well-being, potential and quality of life – for everyone.

We are Kitchener. A city where our neighbourhoods are more connected and diverse today than ever before. Our streets and sidewalks know all kinds of people, and our kitchen tables, meeting rooms and council chambers do, too. Our citizens connect and participate in civic life, bringing their diverse voices and lived experiences to those tables. Their participation has shown us new possibilities, helped us make better decisions, and pointed us toward solutions to some of our most challenging problems.

We are Kitchener. One of Canada's largest cities, and the place we call home. We have smart, sustainable, and innovative housing solutions to ensure that people have a place to call their own. In 2043, the city is filled with well-designed, adaptive reuses and new mixed-use, mixed-income housing options as diverse as our neighbourhoods and the people who live in them.

We are Kitchener. A city where our neighbourhoods are pedestrian-friendly and full of businesses and services that meet our daily needs. Our community centres, arenas, pools, libraries and sports fields are where we get together and get active. Our busy public parks and spaces have been designed with residents, for residents, so that they welcome and work for people of all ages and abilities. Full of people, activity and ideas, these spaces bring us together and offer access to knowledge and tools to learn about and thrive in the world around us.





We are Kitchener. Our public places and spaces bring us together and have reliable connections that enable us to move around the city in active, clean and accessible ways. Our sidewalks see community connection every day, as people walk, roll and wander – easily and safely getting where they want to go. We use cars and parking lots less and trails, cycling lanes and transit more. Fewer homes and businesses use fossil fuels to heat and cool, and we've reduced our impact on the environment, by using more renewable energy. Consistent awareness and incentives have made climate responsibility second nature for residents and businesses.

We are Kitchener. Together, we serve as stewards of the natural environment, and remain steadfast in our commitment to reconciliation, honouring the Indigenous caretakers who came before us. We have strong relations with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit who call Kitchener home. We preserve and protect parks and natural areas. Our urban forests and our tree canopy soften the boundaries between the built and natural worlds. They are the natural backdrop along our streets, sidewalks and paths, and to the arts and cultural experiences, events and exhibitions that we enjoy. Every time we leave home, we enjoy the cool shade of these investments.

We are Kitchener. A city that has invested in creating an agile and innovative local economy. A city that has strengthened key industries and kept our job market healthy and diverse. We support local businesses to continue to adapt and lead, addressing their challenges and helping them connect and work together. Our city's difference-makers – the talented and resourceful entrepreneurs, workers and artists, whose innovative approaches reflect their pursuit of building a better world – continue to diversify and grow our economy and create jobs for everyone.

We are Kitchener. A city of people who help and care for one another. Our city government works together and with community partners, to offer accessible services and address disparities among communities of greatest need. Our programs are open to everyone with equal access for all, without financial or other barriers. Because of our work, more people than ever feel a deep sense of belonging in Kitchener.

We are Kitchener. The public servants who work alongside our residents and businesses to make a difference. We listen, and are stewards of our City's present and its future. We champion collective goals and work with residents to build our city, one neighbourhood at a time. We invite civic action on the issues that matter to residents. We help make decisions, and are accountable. We measure the right things, and report on our progress. Our legacy reflects a diverse and caring workforce that mirrors the diverse and caring city we've helped to build.

As part of #TeamKitchener, we've built trust with residents, and because of this, people from diverse backgrounds vote and take part in public processes in unmatched numbers. We tell stories of the challenges we came together to face over the years, and of how doing so led to a greater understanding of what we share and what makes us unique. By working together and making the most of our differences, residents have helped staff remove barriers, giving more people the opportunity to thrive in Kitchener.

We are Kitchener. It's 2043. We continue to build a city for everyone where, together, we take care of the world around us – and each other. The lessons of our past – and the promise of tomorrow – remind us that people who love their city can always change it, and our world, for the better. Together.



Kitchener's VISION for 2043

Building a city for everyone where, together,
we take care of the world around us – and each other.



Achieving our vision starts with the pursuit of the goals identified within the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Developed through unprecedented consultation, exploration and working alongside members of our community, our goals through the life of this plan are to build a connected city; cultivate a green city; create an economically thriving city; foster a caring city and, as city employees, steward a better city.

This plan is a guide to keep Council and city staff aligned with the community's priorities. It serves as the foundation for the city's strategies, actions and initiatives and ensures the alignment of projects and work conducted across the corporation's many departments and divisions.



Building a **CONNECTED** **CITY** together

We live in all kinds of neighbourhoods and types of housing.

We work together to ensure that we each have secure and affordable homes.

We get around easily, sustainably and safely to the places and spaces that matter most to us.



- Housing For All implementation
- Localized Transportation Safety Improvement Program
- City-wide Active Transportation routes
- Official Plan comprehensive update



Cultivating a **GREEN CITY** together

We follow a sustainable path to a greener, healthier city.

We work together to enhance and protect our parks and natural environment while transitioning to a low-carbon future. We support businesses and residents to make more climate-positive choices.



- Corporate Climate Action Plan 2.0
- Clean energy transition strategy
- District energy business case
- Green development standards
- Implement tree canopy target plan
- Implementing actions from parks master plan
- Parkland acquisition strategy
- Grand River park strategy



Creating an ECONOMICALLY- THRIVING CITY together

We use our collective strengths to grow an agile and diverse local economy powered by talented entrepreneurs, workers and artists. We work together to create opportunities for everyone and a resilient future that propels our city forward.



- Accelerate commercial business approvals
- Implement health/medical technology innovation campus
- Develop a creative industries school
- Create a strategy for events and festivals
- Implement an entertainment venue management structure
- Create a new arts and culture master plan



Fostering a **CARING** **CITY** together

We welcome residents of all ages, backgrounds and lived experiences. We work together on the decisions that matter to us and have a meaningful influence in our community. We're healthy and thriving as we easily access the diverse and inclusive programs and services we need to succeed.



- Advance truth and reconciliation
- Municipal newcomers strategy
- Enhance city's engagement practices
- Community centre operating model
- City-led recreation and leisure program review
- Leisure facilities master plan update
- Community grants review



Stewarding a **BETTER CITY** together

We, the City's employees, are stewards of Kitchener's present and its future. We're responsive, innovative, diverse and accountable public servants who work together efficiently to serve residents. We remove barriers and champion residents' collective vision for a better city and a better world.



- Digital Kitchener strategy
- Implement city-wide data strategy
- Strengthen employer identity/ value proposition
- Support a psychologically safe workplace
- Procurement innovation



OUR COMMITMENT

to accountability

As public servants in leadership roles at the City of Kitchener, we are accountable to the community we serve. The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is a reflection of significant feedback from citizens. The community's priorities are our priorities.

As we work together toward building a city for everyone where, together, we take care of the world around us – and each other, the city's Corporate Leadership Team commits to be accountable for progress towards the strategic plan's goals and to regularly report our progress.

To support this commitment to accountability, the following principles will guide the work we undertake to support making meaningful progress; equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility; strong relationships with the community and partners; and innovation as an enabler of success.

The city's Compass Kitchener Citizen Advisory Committee will review and assess our progress and will report publicly each year on how well we are doing.

We are taking an adaptive approach to setting actions for this strategic plan in order to better respond to emerging community needs and opportunities over the 4-year period. While we have identified initial actions to take in its first years, the plan is a living document rooted firmly in community goals yet offering flexibility for the future actions available to us.



Chief Administrative Officer

Dan Chapman

General Manager, Infrastructure Services

Denise McGoldrick

General Manager, Development Services

Justin Readman

General Manager, Corporate Services

Victoria Raab

Chief Financial Officer

Jonathan Lautenbach

General Manager, Community Services and Deputy CAO

Michael May



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