

# Staff Report



Development Services Department

[www.kitchener.ca](http://www.kitchener.ca)

---

**REPORT TO:** Climate Change and Environment Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** March 20, 2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Natalie Goss, Manager, Policy and Research, 519-783-8933

**PREPARED BY:** Janine Oosterveld, Manager, Customer Experience and Project Management, 519-783-8942

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

**DATE OF REPORT:** March 4, 2025

**REPORT NO.:** DSD-2025-120

**SUBJECT:** High-Performance Development Standards Discussion Draft

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For Discussion.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Climate Change and Environment Committee (CCEC) on the High-Performance Development Standards (HPDS) and to seek feedback on the discussion draft.
- The key finding of this report is that engagement is underway to support the development of the HPDS across the seven area municipalities in Waterloo Region with the support of the Region of Waterloo, local utilities and under the leadership of WR Community Energy to support climate action and other environmental objectives.
- There are no financial implications identified in this report.
- Community engagement for the HPDS includes both community and development industry-focused opportunities supported by a project engagement webpage.
- 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:**

Under the leadership of WR Community Energy, the City of Kitchener is collaborating with municipalities in Waterloo Region as well as local utilities including Kitchener Utilities to establish a harmonized approach to creating standards for new development that undergo a Planning Act approval. These standards are proposed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, support adaptation to a changing climate and other environmental objectives. Taking a simple, consistent approach across the region is intended to create a level playing field for developers while collectively addressing community climate goals.

\*\*\* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. \*\*\*  
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

As background, WR Community Energy formed a Land Use and Energy Working Group in 2021 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 joined the subcommittee creating a unique opportunity in Waterloo Region to establish a harmonized standard across the region's seven urban and rural municipalities. To support this project, WR Community Energy in collaboration with the subcommittee received a grant from Natural Resources Canada to fund this work including hiring a Community Energy Planner staff position 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.

In June 2024, formal consultation was initiated including community education and design workshops, booths at community events, a development industry workshop, and discussions at CCEC (DSD-2024-267) and Kitchener's Development Liaison Committee. The purpose of the initial engagement was to identify and prioritize categories for the first version of the standard.

The information from the initial phase of engagement informed a discussion draft which was introduced at an All Councils meeting on December 6, 2024, and posted on the project webpage, launching the second phase of engagement described in this report.

## **REPORT:**

This report provides an update on the HPDS project engagement program this spring and seeks feedback from the Climate Change and Environment Committee on the discussion draft content.

**Project Timeline.** Key project milestones include the following:

- Spring 2024: Engagement launch to garner initial feedback seeking feedback on priorities among potential focus areas;
- Fall 2024: [Discussion Draft](#) release through the [project webpage](#) presented at the All Councils meeting on December 6th;
- Winter-Fall 2025: Engagement on the discussion draft and refined standards to prepare for decisions among each municipality later in 2025 or early 2026; and,
- 2026: Anticipated implementation including staff and industry training.

The current phase of engagement has included a series of five in-person community engagement events held throughout the region including a joint Kitchener and Waterloo session on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The project webpage includes a survey for an online opportunity to provide feedback. Development industry engagement has included on-going discussions with Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association and Ontario Home Builders'

Association representatives, attendance at Build Urban meetings as well as Kitchener Development Liaison Committee and an industry workshop in March. 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.

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 discussion draft includes 14 draft categories grouped in three sections as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Potential categories for high-performance standards

Built Environment	Natural Environment	Energy Efficiency
Develop safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces that address the inequities that serve as barriers to inclusive communities	Recognize the importance of the natural environment and require mindful consumption and resource use to minimize the contributions to GHG emissions	Require energy efficient and resilient developments and structures
<b>B1.</b> EV Parking and Charging Infrastructure <b>B2.</b> Active Transportation <b>B3.</b> Exterior Lighting <b>B4.</b> Refuge Area <b>B5.</b> Sustainable Roofing	<b>N1.</b> Vegetation and Landscaping <b>N2.</b> Waste <b>N3.</b> Water Efficiency <b>N4.</b> Bird Friendly Design <b>N5.</b> Stormwater	<b>E1.</b> Embodied Carbon <b>E2.</b> GHG Emissions Reduction <b>E3.</b> Airtightness <b>E4.</b> Local Energy Generation

Additional categories may be incorporated in future versions consistent with other municipalities with established standards (e.g., Toronto Green Standard is currently version 4).

**Questions for CCEC:**

- Does the CCEC have overall or high-level feedback on the approach to the HPDS in the discussion draft?
- Would the CCEC be interested in providing more in-depth feedback on the discussion draft or future iterations?
- If so, how would the CCEC like to provide more in-depth feedback? (e.g. subcommittee, focused discussions at CCEC meetings by topic)

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 in late Q2 or Q3 of 2025 as the draft HPDS is refined with further detail on each metric category.

**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 committee meeting. Additionally, the project webpage can be found at <https://www.engagewr.ca/high-performance-development-standards>

CONSULT – To date, there have been two phases of engagement which have included in-person and online engagement opportunities with outreach to both the community and development industry. Community engagement events held throughout the region including a joint Kitchener and Waterloo session on February 19<sup>th</sup> as well as an online survey. Development industry engagement included workshops in the summer and fall of 2024 with the next workshop planned for late March. Additionally, industry engagement includes discussions at Build Urban and 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.

COLLABORATE – WR Community Energy is collaborating with development industry representatives to analyse the impacts of the draft HPDS and will be gauging interest in a development industry working team for in-depth discussions as the standards are developed and refined.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- [DSD-2023-109](#) - Harmonized Green Development Standards Phase 2 Project Launch
- [DSD-2024-067](#) Harmonized Green Development Standards Project Update
- [DSD-2024-267](#) Waterloo Region High Performance Development Standards Engagement Launch
- Planning Act