

KITCHENER'S 2023-2026  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**



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.								
Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
Housing For All Implementation	Continue to implement the City's Housing For All Strategy, working with other orders of government and a broad range of community partners, to enable the delivery of affordable housing units in our community by removing barriers at the City, advocating on behalf of the City of Kitchener; and implementing incentives that will enable more affordable housing to be built faster.	DSD Planning & Housing Policy	Lucas Van Meer-Mass	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, the focus of the action will be advancing work on a housing needs assessment, which will in turn support the filling data gaps, an inclusionary zoning assessment, the development of Kitchener 2051, and the development of Housing for All 2.0.	On Track	A staff report has been presented to council detailing the achievement or substantial achievement of Housing for All's 44 objectives. Work continues on a new Housing Needs Assessment, which will inform the development of Kitchener 2051, the City's new Official Plan. Staff are now preparing the work plan for a new iteration of Housing for All, which will complement the policies and direction of the new Official Plan.
Localized Transportation Safety Improvement Program	Implement targeted, strategic infrastructure changes to make big improvements in the safety and connectivity of the active transportation network. This work is data-driven and community-guided through priorities identified in the Cycling and Trails Master Plan and Vision Zero.	DSD Transportation	Connor Payne	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, the focus of the action will be continued implementation Vision Zero, including various safety and traffic calming improvements as identified in the Vision Zero Strategy.	On Track	Vision Zero 2025 hot spot designs have been completed, and a council report went to committee for approval on April 14. Seasonal traffic calming locations have been identified with installation scheduled for April. Council and internal stakeholder consultation has been completed as a part of these programs with council supporting the proposed 2025 initiatives.
City-wide Active Transportation Routes	Encourage increased use of active transportation that connects neighbourhoods through holistic trail and bike route enhancements that are easy to identify, navigate and use for all ages and abilities.	DSD Transportation	Alison Carlyle	Apr 2024	Sept 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	This year, work to advance this strategic action will focus primarily on implementing Route 1, which connects the Boardwalk to Downtown. Engagement for the project was completed in the fall of 2024 and the What We Heard report has now been shared on the Engage page. Staff have issued an RFP to complete the required infrastructure improvements so the route is comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. This also includes the installation of branded wayfinding signage to make the route easy to identify and navigate.
Official Plan Comprehensive Update	Undertake a comprehensive review of both the City's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan in an integrated way, to update the rules around what can be built in Kitchener's neighbourhoods and provide more flexible options for how people get around; and including a focus on encouraging missing middle housing and adapting to climate change.	DSD Planning & Housing Policy	Tim Donegani	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, Phase 2 of this action will focus on continued utilization of the community working group to guide engagement, receipt of final deliverables from consultant-led work, and drafting of the new official plan. Phase 3 of this action will begin in 2026.	On Track	The community working group has continued to meet monthly and has shaped the draft big ideas that will form Kitchener's new Official Plan and have guided the development of a community conversation kit. A second speaker series event was held together with an "approaches to growth" event on April 5. Dialogue has continued with Indigenous rights holders, as well as conversations to council. A consultant has been retained to develop the Transportation Master Plan.

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**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.

Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
Corporate Climate Action Plan 2.0	Define the City's corporate Climate Action Plan 2.0 to achieve GHG emission reductions generated by City-owned assets, including at least one energy efficiency business case/implementation and 'greening' the City fleet in order to adapt to a low-carbon future and build resilience for climate change impacts.	DSD Office of GM	Anna Marie Cipriani	Jan 2024	Jun 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, the focus of this action will be completing the Corporate Climate Action Plan 2.0 and initiating its implementation.	On Track	Data is coming in from identified sources and being compiled for analysis to support the development of a business case for the cold water ice pilot project.
Clean Energy Transition Strategy	Complete the Kitchener Utilities clean energy transition strategy and implementation plan to shift reliance on conventional natural gas as an energy source in order to transition to a low-carbon future for Kitchener.	INS Office of GM	Kate Daley	Jan 2024	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, the focus is on evaluation of options and recommending business opportunities to respond to the energy transition. The next phase of this action will begin in 2026.	On Track	Phase 2 of the Kitchener Utilities Clean Energy Transition Strategy is focused on evaluating potential business activities to create the strategy. Work to date has focused on detailed scoping of the potential business activities identified. Procurement processes are complete or nearing completion for the substantive contracts required for strategy development. This includes the business consulting team doing the bulk of the business, technical, and guiding principles analysis. It also includes specialist consultants focused on developing a thermal energy system business case for new development areas and assessing renewable energy potential of City properties.
District Energy Business Case	Complete a District Energy business case for the downtown area to explore clean energy opportunities to be a leader as a low-carbon city.	DSD Planning & Housing Policy	Tim Donegani	Jan 2024	Mar 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	The business case is currently being reassessed for return on investment and continued alignment with the Bramm Yards redevelopment project.  <b>The planned completion for this strategic action has been moved from March 2025 to August 2025.</b>
High Performance Development Standards	Define and implement high performance development standards for new building construction throughout Kitchener which will ensure they are more sustainable.	DSD Planning & Housing Policy	Janine Oosterveld	Feb 2024	Dec 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	The second round of engagement took place in the first quarter of 2025 with the launch of a discussion draft. Engagement included in-person community sessions, an online survey, a development industry workshop, discussions with development industry, attendance at Kitchener's Development Liaison Committee and the Climate Change and Environment Committee. Staff from local area municipalities are working to update and refine the draft for further consultation later this year prior to bringing forward a recommendation to council.

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Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
<b>Implement tree canopy target plan</b>	Implement Council-approved investments in tree canopy improvements with a focus on planting more trees, maintenance of existing trees; increase communication and stewardship for residents, institutions and businesses to plant and maintain trees on private property.	<b>INS Parks &amp; Cemeteries</b>	<b>Hajnal Kovacs</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, the focus of this action will be tree planting in areas with low equity scores and supporting Reep's private planting program, proactive pruning and maintenance programs, and creating a forestry and natural areas communications strategy.	<b>On Track</b>	In spring 2025, the City will plant 300 additional trees on boulevards, including 38 in the Chandler Mowat Community as part of the Community Canopy program, which now has its own website <a href="https://kitchener.ca/communitycanopy">kitchener.ca/communitycanopy</a> . The program focuses planting in areas with low tree equity scores. The City is also supporting Reep Green Solutions to plant 100 trees in canopy-deficient areas. Block pruning in 2025 will aim to prune 7,500 trees, with oak trees pruned during the winter as part of the specialized oak pruning initiative. Communication and engagement with the community continues such as enhancing the webpage and graphics on our vehicles.
<b>Implementing actions from Parks master plan</b>	Implementing actions from the 'Places' component of the City's 'Spaces and Places' plan with a focus on the quality of park spaces including infrastructure, environment and design, to encourage people to spend more time in parks.	<b>INS Parks &amp; Cemeteries</b>	<b>Mark Parris</b>	<b>Jan 2025</b>	<b>Jun 2026</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, Phase 1 will include obtaining council approval for the Places component of the Spaces and Places Plan and working on the initial priorities of the plan. Tasks will include creating a workplan and communication/engagement strategy, as well as advancing park network improvements for the following parks: Hibner, Breithaupt, Major, Arnold, and Ash Park. Additional projects to be undertaken include the Upper Canada Park accessible sportsfield improvements and amenities as well as splashpad improvements at Chandler Mowat Community Centre.	<b>On Track</b>	Following extensive community, staff and councillor engagement, the Parks Master Plan – Places will be presented to council for approval in May. Phase 1 implementation actions are resourced, and planning and design will begin in 2025 with construction varying between 2025 and 2026. In addition to the projects identified in the implementation notes, council also supported accelerating investment in outdoor courts and planning has begun to identify the types of investment and locations.
<b>Parkland Acquisition Strategy</b>	Create a Parkland Acquisition Strategy to support the addition of park space to urban areas, with a focus on underserviced areas and updating the funding model.	<b>DSD Development &amp; Housing Approvals</b>	<b>Garett Stevenson</b>	<b>Jun 2024</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	<b>On Track</b>	This strategic action will be led by a Parks Planning & Development Project Manager, who is being onboarded in April. The project manager will lead the work associated with this action going forward, and an update will be presented to council this summer.
<b>Grand River Park Strategy</b>	Complete a strategy to advance the creation of a significant new park near the Grand River.	<b>INS Parks &amp; Cemeteries</b>	<b>Carol Bacon</b>	<b>Oct 2023</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 1 of this action will establish a vision for a Grand River Park, a site inventory and assessment of opportunities and constraints, and recommendations on implementation of land acquisition. Phase 2 of this action will begin in 2025-2026.	<b>On Track</b>	Staff are preparing and coordinating the Grand River Parkland acquisition strategy. Background review for the Grand River Park is well advanced, and permissions are being sought to undertake site inventory and due diligence investigations for the lands through field studies.

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**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.

Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
Accelerate Commercial Business Approvals	Facilitate streamlined business process and approvals for brick and mortar retail business across the City.	DSD Office of GM	Margaret Love	Sep 2023	Apr 2024	This strategic action will be completed in 2024.	Complete	A Lean review of seven processes, administered within five business areas (Building, Licensing, Planning, Legal, and Economic Development), was completed in March 2024. The review resulted in 55 recommendations to streamline processes and help businesses open their doors quicker. The review included engagement with business owners and City staff, including the Waterloo Region Small Business Centre. A report summarizing the review outcomes and requesting funding to begin implementing the recommendations was provided to Finance and Corporate Services Committee in April. The project is now complete, and a two-year implementation plan has been developed.  The final report can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
Implement Health/Medical Technology Innovation Campus	Advance the health innovation sector in partnership with local post-secondary institutions and businesses to support innovation and business development in the medical technology field.	DSD Economic Development	Cory Bluhm	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, Phase 1 will focus on designing, building, and opening the new WR Small Business Centre space at the Health Innovation Arena and advancing early environmental and geotechnical work for the Bramm Yards.	On Track	Design of the Small Business Centre space continues. An RFP process is underway to select a consultant to proceed with the environmental and geotechnical work for the Bramm Yards.
Creative Industries School	Collaborate with Conestoga College to build a new, leading-edge Creative Industries school focused on skill building and career development in media, communications, and design.	DSD Economic Development	Lauren Chlumsky	Jul 2024	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 1 of this action will focus on development of a business case to consider an appropriate level of investment. Phase 2 of this action will begin in 2025.	On Track	Progress on the business case has been delayed as staff work with partners on emerging considerations related to this action.  <b>The planned completion for this strategic action has been moved from December 2025 to May 2026.</b>
Special Events & Festivals Action Plan	Develop a strategy for events and community festivals to ensure Kitchener is a destination point for all, with a focus on residents' quality of life, cultural events, and supporting local business, culture and commerce.	DSD Economic Development	Steve Roth	Oct 2025	Dec 2026	This strategic action will be completed in 2026.	Not Started	This strategic action is planned to start in October 2025.



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Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
Entertainment Venue Management	Enhance entertainment venue management by working with key stakeholders, businesses and cultural producers across all City-affiliated entertainment venues.	DSD Economic Development	Jeremy Dueck	Feb 2024	Dec 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	The Culture & Entertainment division has made progress in the following areas of enhancing and supporting City-owned culture and entertainment venues: as per staff report DSD-2024-281, working towards the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts (CCPA) being fully operated by the City, with mentorship services provided by a third-party, non-profit arts organization; initiating the recruitment process for Event Operations Technicians and part-time staff to support the operation of the CCPA; working with venue operators on shared service opportunities (e.g., ticketing and marketing); coordinating capital projects with FM across all venues; and reviewing and refining standard operating procedures such as event intake and staffing/set-up at the Victoria Park Pavilion.
Implement Arts & Creative Industries Action Plan	Implement the Arts and Culture Master Plan in order to grow arts and culture in Kitchener and become a global leader in creative industries.	DSD Economic Development	Andrea Hallam	Oct 2025	Dec 2026	This strategic action will be completed in 2026.	Not Started	This strategic action is planned to start in October 2025.



**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.

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<b>Advance Truth and Reconciliation</b>	Advance meaningful actions to Truth and Reconciliation as identified and through relationship-building with Indigenous communities and rights-holders.	<b>COR Earii</b>	<b>Jaclyn Rodrigues</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Dec 2024</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024, intentional and ongoing relationship building with Indigenous rights-holders will continue to be a focus, with emphasis on delivering meaningful actions as identified by and with these communities.	<b><u>Complete</u></b>	<p>For the past year, staff have highlighted the Wijiindamaan project; a multi-partner Indigenous land restoration project located within the Pioneer Tower Natural Area. Together, partners involved in the project (Wisahketowinowak Urban Indigenous Garden Collective, White Owl Native Ancestry Association and the City of Kitchener and Conestoga College) are working to help create sustainable, traditional food and medicines, increase biodiversity through habitat restoration and reintroduce natural species into the environment. Progress on this project will continue over several years and will therefore be removed from council's strategic plan implementation updates going forward.</p> <p>Advancing meaningful actions to truth and reconciliation remains a foundational commitment of the City of Kitchener. This work begins with developing meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and rights-holders, and results in concrete actions, like the Wijiindamaan project. Advancing truth and reconciliation is not time-bound to the traditional reporting cadence of the strategic plan and is not tied to a single project or action. We are committed to demonstrating our continued commitment to truth and reconciliation in greater depth than this format allows at <a href="http://www.kitchener.ca/reconciliation">www.kitchener.ca/reconciliation</a>.</p>
<b>Municipal Newcomers Strategy</b>	Create a strategy for newcomers to Canada in Kitchener focused on the role the municipality can play in welcoming newcomers into the community and supporting them where needed.	<b>CSD Office of GM</b>	<b>Olabukonla Mise</b>	<b>Jul 2024</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 1 of this action will focus on project scoping, an environmental scan and a community needs assessment. Phase 2 of this action will occur in 2025.	<b>On Track</b>	<p>Strategy development is underway, with just over 40 targeted consultations with external newcomer-serving organizations and City staff have been completed to further scope the strategy and identify opportunities to collaborate on community engagement tactics. A comprehensive community engagement strategy has been developed and approved to launch in May, which will be focused on pop-up engagements at community centres, cultural festivals and other City-led events, collaborative events with community partners, and the hosting of community conversations through creative workshops and presentations. Community engagement will run from May to July. The Newcomer Strategy Working Group has been assembled, with six members of the community selected to be part of the working group alongside City staff and representatives from select newcomer-serving organizations. Working group onboarding and monthly meetings will begin in May and run until December.</p>

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Enhance City's Engagement Practices	Enhance the City's engagement practices to increase diverse representation, with a focus on including more deliberative/collaborative/entrust/co-creation approaches; and include a specific focus on developing capacity to promote, facilitate and coordinate ongoing relationship-building and connection with equity-deserving communities.	COR Office of GM	Jaclyn Rodrigues	Jan 2025	Dec 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, Phase 2 will focus on an external public engagement campaign to gather feedback on foundational elements of the policy, followed by drafting the policy for council approval.	On Track	A consultant has been hired to lead the external engagement process. Staff and the consultants have successfully kicked off the project and are completing the planning and design phase. This phase includes completing a background review, developing an engagement and communications plan, creating engagement materials, and coordinating engagement activities. Engagement is scheduled to begin at the end of April.
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Community Centre Operating Model	Modernize the City's community centre operating model to increase the number and diversity of programs and other supports provided at community centres, with a specific focus on centres located in under-served neighbourhoods.	CSD Office of GM	Elin Moorlag Silk	Apr 2024	Aug 2025	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 2 of this action will focus on development of EDI training for affiliated neighbourhood associations and development of EDI and reinvestment policies for affiliated neighbourhood associations.	On Track	Development of policy templates is underway, with draft policies to be reviewed by select affiliated neighbourhood associations in May and finalized for distribution by end of June. EDI training for affiliated neighbourhood associations is currently under development and will be available for distribution for the 2026 affiliation cycle.
City-led Recreation & Leisure program review	Review how the City provides direct recreation and leisure programming across all age groups to better position the municipality to respond to changing community needs.	CSD Office of GM	Elin Moorlag Silk	Jul 2024	Dec 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	Analysis of programming data, participation rates and waitlist numbers across all programs offered by the City at community centres and pools has been started. The project charter and scoping document are in the process of being drafted, with plans to begin staff engagement for the review in May.
Sport and Recreation Master Plan	Update the City's Sport & Recreation Master Plan including a focus on the provision of recreation and leisure that meet increasingly diverse needs of the community.	CSD Office of GM	Helena Foulds	Sep 2025	Sept 2026	This strategic action will be completed in 2026.	Not Started	This strategic action is planned to start in September 2025.
Community Grants Review	Change how the City utilizes its community grant program to better support community groups working on priorities that are aligned with the City's Strategic Plan.	CSD Office of GM	Elin Moorlag Silk	May 2024	August 2025	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	On Track	An external consultant has been hired to conduct a comprehensive review of the City's community grants program. Project scoping, document review, background research, staff consultations, and benchmarking with other municipalities is currently underway. A staff steering committee has been assembled of subject-matter experts to support the work of the consultant, meeting monthly to provide feedback and input on the workplan. Public engagement with current and former community grant recipients is scheduled to begin May, which will include an online survey, interviews, focus groups and workshops. A preliminary summary report of all compiled research and draft recommendations will be submitted to staff later this year.



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## 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.

Strategic Action	Description	Dept & Division	Project Manager	Planned Start	Planned Completion	Implementation Notes	Progress Update	
<b>Strengthen employer identity/value proposition</b>	Strengthen the City of Kitchener employer identity and employee value proposition to remain a competitive employer in order to attract and retain top talent.	<b>COR Human Resources</b>	<b>Annie Johnson</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Jun 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 2 of this action will focus on implementing specific solutions within the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) framework based on the initial set of priorities. Phase 3 of this action will occur in 2025-2026.	<b>On Track</b>	Staff continue to review and modernize HR policies to make the City an attractive and competitive employer, and to provide more equitable application across the workforce. Work has begun on employer identity, which refers to the unique set of values, culture and reputation that define the City as an organization and makes it an attractive place to work.
<b>Procurement innovation</b>	Create innovative procurement opportunities to better engage with local start-ups and provide more opportunities for companies to propose creative ways to improve city service delivery.	<b>FIN Financial Operations</b>	<b>Ryan Scott</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>	<b>Mar 2025</b>	This strategic action will be completed in 2025.	<b><u>Complete</u></b>	A communications notice regarding the Pitch Kitchener awards, which have been granted to three companies, is complete. The necessary agreements have been finalized with these companies, and the pilot phase for the technologies is set to begin and conclude this year. Beyond 2025, the intent is to continue the Pitch Kitchener program within regular City operations.  A link to the Pitch Kitchener website can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Implement City-wide Data Strategy</b>	Implement a City-wide Data Strategy to build foundational, organization-wide data practices to scale across the City, in order to deliver better services for residents.	<b>COR Office of the GM</b>	<b>Linnea Scian</b>	<b>May 2024</b>	<b>May 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2024-2025, Phase 1 of this action will focus on developing a project plan utilizing the draft Kitchener Citywide Data Strategy developed as part of the Bloomberg Philanthropy Citywide Data Alliance, with focus on governance, quality, and capacity. Phase 2 of this action will occur in 2025-2026.	<b>On Track</b>	Staff have implemented an internal engagement strategy, which included a survey and focus groups. The results from this engagement helped inform a strategy session with the City's Corporate Leadership Team in March. Staff have also hired a consultant to help complete a data governance assessment, which is expected to be complete in May. Work has begun on a multi-year strategy and work-plan, which will focus on building foundational, organization-wide data practices, as well as training and development for staff.
<b>Digital Kitchener Strategy</b>	Refresh the City's Digital Kitchener strategy with a focus on investigating and adopting technologies including artificial intelligence, and innovations that improve service delivery for residents.	<b>COR Technology Innovation &amp; Services</b>	<b>Nicole Amaral</b>	<b>Jan 2025</b>	<b>Jun 2026</b>	This strategic action will be completed in 2026.	<b>On Track</b>	The development of a project plan is underway with a primary focus on creating an intentional research and engagement plan. Early project planning has included consulting on the project direction and objectives with key stakeholders to ensure the scope, objectives and deliverables align with corporate priorities and that the appropriate stakeholders are identified for consultation. A Digital Kitchener Innovation Lab co-op student(s) will be hired to support the review.
<b>Support a Psychologically Safe Workplace</b>	Identify and implement actions to support a psychologically safe workplace to enhance employee wellbeing, productivity and innovation.	<b>COR Human Resources</b>	<b>Dimetra Resendes</b>	<b>Jan 2025</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>	This is a multi-year strategic action. In 2025, Phase 1 of this action will focus on project scoping, preparing a request for consulting support, reviewing and analyzing internal psychological safety data, and an environmental scan of municipal implementations of the 13 factors of Psychological Health and Safety.	<b>On Track</b>	Research has been completed to examine how other municipalities have implemented the 13 factors of Psychological Health and Safety. Employee Culture Survey results have also now been analyzed. Based on these findings, a phased implementation approach has been developed, and a project charter has been drafted. The project charter will be presented to the City's Corporate Leadership Team for endorsement at the end of April.