

# Staff Report



Chief Administrator's Office

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**REPORT TO:** Committee of the Whole

**DATE OF MEETING:** December 15, 2025

**SUBMITTED BY:** Margaret Love, Director, Strategy and Corporate Performance, 519-783-8951

**PREPARED BY:** Margaret Love, Director, Strategy and Corporate Performance, 519-783-8951

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** Ward(s)

**DATE OF REPORT:** November 28, 2025

**REPORT NO.:** CAO-2025-466

**SUBJECT:** K-W Joint Service Initiatives Committee - 2025 Update

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**RECOMMENDATION:**  
For Information.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The report provides Council an update on joint service initiatives between Kitchener and Waterloo.
- All four joint initiatives will carry over into 2026 and four new initiatives have been added and will commence in 2026.
- There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- The community was informed by posting of the report to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the Council meeting, and current information on the joint services page of the City's website.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

## BACKGROUND:

This report provides Council an update on Joint Service Initiatives between Kitchener and Waterloo. The two Cities have an established history of collaboration, and a formalized approach through the Kitchener-Waterloo Joint Service Initiatives Committee (JSIC) for over 17 years. The JSIC seeks to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of resources and service delivery, collaborate on strategic initiatives, and build capacity from best practices – all to benefit residents in both cities. Over 80 joint service initiatives have been undertaken, with some formally completed and others continuing as part of ongoing operations and service delivery. Staff track progress of the initiatives including service improvements, efficiencies and cost savings achieved, which are reported to Council annually.

## REPORT:

Annual joint service initiatives are identified in the fall for the upcoming year by the JSIC (the CAOs and senior leadership teams of each municipality) by selecting several initiatives which:

- Enhance the ability of either city to deliver or develop a service or program outside of its resources;
- Create service-level improvements, while maintaining costs or producing future savings;
- Provide operational and/or capital opportunities; and/or
- Feature best practices of one or both organizations.

### **2025 Joint Services Initiative Accomplishments**

All four 2025 initiatives will continue in 2026. Key accomplishments and progress updates for each initiative are highlighted below.

#### ***Fleet Innovation: Continuing into 2026***

- Staff from Kitchener and Waterloo continue to assess autonomous mower implementation, including electrical infrastructure needs at key sports fields.
- Waterloo is exploring Kitchener's telematics system to track and audit Hours of Service based on regulations from the Ministry of Transportation.
- While no savings have been realized to date, early estimates suggest autonomous mowers may reduce maintenance costs by up to 70%, with potential annual fuel savings of \$900 and 1.5 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per unit.

#### ***Inclusionary Zoning – Affordable Housing: Continuing into 2026***

- This multi-year initiative is assessing, through a coordinated approach, the impact and opportunity of Inclusionary Zoning within Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
- On June 23, Waterloo Council passed a resolution that the implementation timing of IZ remain as “an undetermined date in the future” and directed staff to undertake an additional market evaluation in association with the City of Kitchener, the City of Cambridge, and the Region of Waterloo. Staff plan to bring a report to council with recommendations for the timing of IZ implementation in early 2026.
- Kitchener retained NBLC to update its market assessment. Kitchener's presentation of NBLC's findings and IZ framework recommendations were received at Standing Committee on December 1, 2025.
- A decision was made by the Minister on October 27, 2025 to approve the City of Kitchener Official Plan amendment, which modified the implementation date for Inclusionary Zoning policies within Protected Major Transit Station Areas, changing it from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2026.
- Through coordinated consultant work and shared engagement efforts, each municipality has realized estimated savings of \$130,000+.

#### ***Official Plan Comprehensive Reviews: Continuing into 2026***

- The Cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are both undertaking comprehensive reviews and updates to their respective Official Plans. These key enabling land use planning strategies will guide future growth and development across the communities and it is important to pursue them in a coordinated manner and toward consistent frameworks and outputs.
- Planning staff from Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and the Region continue to meet bi-monthly to align on Official Plan policies and share learnings across jurisdictions.
- Waterloo awaits Ministry approval on Phase 1 (OPA 58) and has initiated Phase 2 work, while Kitchener has completed all supporting studies and has drafted its new Official Plan, with public engagement planned for late 2025 and adoption targeted for early 2026.

- Joint efforts on integrating the Regional Official Plan policies - particularly around source water protection and natural heritage - have led to preliminary staff resource savings through shared approaches and reduced duplication.

### ***Sport and Recreation Joint Services Committee: Continuing into 2026***

- Kitchener and Waterloo both liaise with a variety of community, sport and recreation groups and organizations to deliver programming and services to residents. The purpose of this initiative is to bring consistency to the approach of sport and recreation service delivery through information sharing, understanding best practices, joint training and development, and maximizing resources with the potential for the initiative to expand beyond the two Cities to include other local municipalities.
- Municipal staff across Waterloo Region have initiated planning for the 2026 Ontario Summer Games and continue to collaborate on affiliate education sessions and special events like the Presidents Dinner.
- Ongoing inter-municipal dialogue is helping clarify alignment opportunities and rationale across key areas including sport affiliation, space allocation, Indigenous rentals, and resident priority policies.
- Cricket strategy work is complete, with action items advancing to respective Councils.
- Phase 3 of the Sports Hall of Fame is underway, focusing on digitization and restarting the induction process with a READI lens.

### **New Joint Service Initiatives to Begin in 2026**

In addition to the four continuing initiatives, the JSIC added four new initiatives to the formal program; updates will provided in the next annual report.

The cities of Waterloo and Kitchener will collaborate in the following areas:

#### **(1) Zoning By-Law Review**

The joint review of zoning by-laws between Kitchener and Waterloo aims to explore opportunities for greater alignment where feasible, with the goal of providing a more consistent regulatory framework across both cities. This includes potential consistency in areas such as setbacks; enabling zoning that permits CMHC housing design catalogue designs as of right; built form regulations (e.g., density and height), and streamlined zoning categories/regulations. While recognizing that each municipality has unique planning contexts that may not always allow for full alignment, both cities are committed to identifying and advancing areas of shared interest.

#### **(2) Excess Soils Feasibility Study**

Kitchener and Waterloo are jointly exploring more sustainable and cost-effective approaches to managing excess soils generated through municipal projects. Kitchener is initiating a study focused on reusing soils on city-owned lands to reduce the need for offsite disposal. Both cities are interested in identifying alternatives to traditional gravel pit disposal, including the potential use of vacant municipal lands or strategic land acquisition for beneficial reuse and future redevelopment. This collaboration offers an opportunity to align strategies and share insights on excess soil management across both cities.

#### **(3) Streaming Services in City Sport and Recreation Facilities**

The cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are collaborating on a clear and consistent policy framework for live streaming services in recreation facilities. This would include establishing shared guidelines on when and how streaming is activated, ownership and maintenance of camera equipment, and key privacy considerations.

#### **(4) OneWater Initiative**

Kitchener and Waterloo are jointly exploring the feasibility of transitioning from conventional water and wastewater systems toward a more circular model that prioritizes reuse before discharge into the environment. The initiative seeks to identify scalable, locally grounded pilot projects that could engage large water users - such as industry and post-secondary institutions - and leverage municipal assets like stormwater infrastructure. The overarching goal is to extend water system capacity and defer costly investments in new supply infrastructure.

#### **Broader Collaboration**

Outside of the formal JSIC program, both municipalities collaborate informally with one another and with other area municipalities and the Region of Waterloo as project partners. Recent examples of local municipal collaboration outside the formal annual JSIC program include:

- Information-sharing on area municipal **Strategic Plan progress and implementation** including sharing knowledge on approaches to tracking and key indicators as well as looking for collaborative opportunities for the next iteration of the plan.
- Participation in the **Reconciliation Action Partnership**, a collaborative group of municipal representatives working to coordinate efforts to support Indigenous-centred initiatives across Waterloo Region.
- Consistent **public safety communication** content and timing to local residents for, e.g., severe weather event declarations and emergency preparedness week.
- **Government relations and advocacy** on a number of projects including delegation meetings at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference and continued advocacy to the Province on legislative priorities.
- **Area municipal CAOs** identify broader collaboration opportunities to improve service effectiveness and efficiency for citizens, with an emphasis on enhanced collaboration between the Region and local municipalities.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports the delivery of core services.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The ongoing collaboration creates operational and capital costs savings, which vary in amount from year to year. Estimated savings are included under each initiative, where available.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting. Both Cities maintain current information about active joint service initiatives and upcoming projects at: [www.kitchener.ca/jointservices](http://www.kitchener.ca/jointservices) and [www.waterloo.ca/jointservices](http://www.waterloo.ca/jointservices).

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

There are no previous reports/authorities related to this matter.

**APPROVED BY:** Dan Chapman, Chief Administrative Officer