

Staff Report



Development Services Department

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REPORT TO: Planning and Strategic Initiatives Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 20, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Anna Marie Cipriani, Corporate Sustainability Officer, 519-783-8970

PREPARED BY: Fionnula Wade, Sustainability Advisor, 519-707-1464

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Ward(s)

DATE OF REPORT: March 31, 2026

REPORT NO.: DSD-2026-157

SUBJECT: 2025 Pivot: Net-Zero Progress Report

RECOMMENDATION:
For Information

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide progress updates on the City of Kitchener's corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 2016 to 2025 (Attachment A to Report DSD-2026-157), the 23 annual progress reporting metrics (Appendix B), and the 47 action items (Appendix C) identified in *Pivot: Net-Zero*, the City of Kitchener's Corporate Climate Action Plan.
- The key finding of this report is that the City of Kitchener's corporate GHG emissions have seen a 1% increase overall from 2016-2025; and a 7% increase from 2024-2025.
- In recent years, corporate emissions have generally declined. However, corporate emissions increased in 2025, primarily due to external factors beyond operational control. In particular, 2025 saw a 27% increase in the carbon intensity of the electricity grid compared to 2024. In addition, higher heating degree days and more frequent snow events led to increased energy demand for space heating and snow clearing operations, resulting in higher overall emissions for the year.
- Prioritizing the three pathways of energy conservation, fuel switching, and generating renewable energy continue to remain important.
- Of the 47 actions listed in *Pivot: Net-Zero*, 26 (55%) have been completed and/or are on-going and 21 (45%) are in progress (Appendix C).
- 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.**

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

BACKGROUND:

The City of Kitchener has established a corporate near-term target of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 8% by 2026, relative to the 2016 baseline year, and a long-term goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Achieving net-zero emissions means reducing GHG emissions from human activities to the lowest level possible, with any remaining emissions being absorbed from the atmosphere. This report represents the second progress update on the City's second-generation corporate climate action plan, *Pivot: Net-Zero (2024–2027)*, which was approved by Council on April 22, 2024 (DSD-2024-074).

The report has three primary objectives:

1. To provide a corporate GHG emissions reduction progress update for 2025 (Attachment A);
2. To report on progress on the 23 annual performance metrics (Appendix B); and
3. To summarize progress on the 47 action items identified in *Pivot: Net-Zero* (Appendix C).

REPORT:

Progress on Corporate GHGs 2016-2025 (Attachment A)

In 2025, the City of Kitchener emitted 11,664 tonnes of GHGs (tCO_{2e}), which is a 1% increase from 2016-2025, and a 7% from 2024-2025. Over ninety percent of these emissions came from two corporate focus areas – Facilities (59%) and Fleet & Equipment (36%). The 7% emissions increase from 2024 to 2025 is strongly correlated to the increase in heating degree days (HDD), an increase in the number of declared snowfall events with associated plow responses and increases to the carbon intensity of the Ontario electricity grid in 2025. These factors have led to an increase in natural gas consumption for indoor space heating, increased fuel consumption for heavy-duty fleet vehicles, and increased GHG emissions associated with electricity consumption.

Facilities

Facilities GHG emissions increased by 18% from 2024 to 2025 but remain approximately 1% below the 2016 baseline overall. While corporate natural gas-related emissions increased by 3% between 2016 and 2025, corporate electricity-related emissions declined by 14% over the same period. In 2025, an additional 2,432 m² of facility space was added to the corporate inventory. Maintaining a focus on energy efficiency, fuel switching, and on-site renewable energy generation remains a sound strategy to continue to support operational growth while reducing energy costs and carbon emissions.

Fleet & Equipment

Fleet & Equipment emissions have increased relative to the 2016 baseline; however, this trend is primarily attributable to growth in fleet assets and expanding service demands. From 2024 to 2025, fleet emissions rose by 6%, largely due to intensified winter service requirements. Increasing regional climate variability has resulted in more pronounced seasonal weather fluctuations, and the winter of 2025 experienced a notable rise in snowfall events. Declared snow events and plow responses more than tripled compared to 2024 levels, and this heightened winter activity contributed to a 28% increase in emissions from the heavy-duty fleet.

Increase in the carbon intensity of the electricity grid

2025 also marked a 27% increase in the carbon intensity of the electricity grid. The impact of this was clearly demonstrated in streetlights, which has had no changes in energy consumption however emissions increased by 26% from 2024 to 2025.

Corporate Energy Costs

Utility and fuel costs are a necessary part of the organization's operational expenses. In 2025 a total of \$8,481,378 was spend on energy for Facilities, and Fleet and Equipment – \$6,429,573 in Facilities and \$2,051,805 in Fleet & Equipment.

In 2025, the carbon intensity of facilities (excluding pumping stations) was 32 kgCO₂e/m² (0.032 tCO₂e/m²) with an energy cost intensity of \$30/m².

In 2025, the carbon intensity of Kitchener's light and medium-duty fleet was 0.58 kgCO₂e/km (0.00058 tCO₂e/km) with a fuel cost intensity of \$0.29/km.

Calls to Action

Progress on Pivot: Net-Zero actions is outlined in Appendix C. The projects listed immediately below, with anticipated completion in 2026/2027, are particularly important to progress as they are anticipated to provide a clear blueprint on actions to prioritize in both Facilities, and Fleet and Equipment focus area:

- Action 4: Develop an Energy Management Strategy
- Action 7: Develop a Corporate Green Building Standard
- Action 8: Complete a facilities GHG reduction pathway for a suite of high priority City of Kitchener facilities
- Action 9: Develop an Arenas Strategy
- Action 13: Develop a Corporate Solar Strategy
- Action 27: Develop Sustainable Fleet Strategy

Capital and operating decisions today will set the organization on future paths regarding GHG emissions, and prioritizing deep GHG reductions will mitigate climate impacts. Focusing on actions with the greatest potential impact on corporate GHG emissions is key to protecting the City of Kitchener from external threats (e.g., weather variability and the increasing carbon intensity of the Ontario electricity grid) and disruptions while building resiliency towards meeting its long-term net-zero goal. Decisions made at all levels of government can have an impact on the City's GHG emissions, as demonstrated by changes to the carbon intensity of the electricity grid. Prioritizing the three pathways of energy conservation, fuel switching, and generating renewable energy continue to remain important components of the City's climate strategy.

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 –this report has no impact on the Capital Budget. Individual projects are identified through the budget or procured through standard procurement processes.

Operating Budget – this report 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 council / committee meeting

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- [DSD-2024-074 CorCAP 2.0 Pivot: Net-0](#) (April 22, 2024)
- [DSD-2025-133 2024 Pivot Net-0 Update](#) (May 5, 2025)

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager Development Services
Denise McGoldrick, General Manager Infrastructure Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – *Pivot: Net-Zero 2025 Progress Report*