

# Staff Report



Corporate Services Department

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**REPORT TO:** Finance and Corporate Services Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** April 20, 2026

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nicole Amaral, Innovation Lab Director, 519-783-8175

**PREPARED BY:** Nicole Amaral, Innovation Lab Director, 519-783-8175  
Dan Murray, Technology Innovation & Service Director, 519-783-8435

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All

**DATE OF REPORT:** April 2, 2026

**REPORT NO.:** COR-2026-155

**SUBJECT:** Digital Kitchener 2026 priorities

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## RECOMMENDATION:

**That staff be directed to begin work on the proposed focus areas for Digital Kitchener in 2026, as outlined in Corporate Services Department report COR-2026-155**

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with prioritized focus areas for 2026 initiatives that align with the Digital Kitchener 2.0 strategy.
- The key findings of this report are that a number of 2026 initiatives across the organization align with and are informed by the refreshed Digital Kitchener 2.0 strategy.
- Any initiatives identified that do not already have available budget will be advanced through corporate budget processes for future consideration.
- Community engagement was completed as part of the Digital Kitchener strategy review (COR- 2026- 102) and Council feedback received at the March 9th Finance and Corporate Service Committee meeting which informs the priorities and themes are reflected in this report.
- This report supports Stewarding a Better City Together: Focuses on City employees as stewards of Kitchener; responsive, innovative, diverse & accountable public servants working together to serve residents; removing barriers and championing a better city and a better world.

## BACKGROUND:

On March 23, 2026, Kitchener City Council approved Digital Kitchener 2.0, a refreshed strategy that will guide the City's digital initiatives, priorities, and investments from 2026 to 2030. The strategy was informed by extensive community and stakeholder engagement and emphasizes collaboration, accessibility, responsible innovation, and improved service delivery to residents and businesses.

During the March 9, 2026, Finance and Corporate Services Committee meeting, staff committed to bringing forward an annual view of corporate digital priorities informed by approved strategies. This commitment was intended to support Council’s understanding of how strategic directions are being applied across the organization, while recognizing that digital initiatives are delivered through multiple divisions and existing governance processes.

This report responds to that commitment by providing prioritized focus areas of initiatives planned or underway in 2026 that align with the refreshed Digital Kitchener 2.0 strategy.

**REPORT:**

This report outlines the prioritized focus areas for digital initiatives planned or underway in 2026 that are informed by the refreshed Digital Kitchener strategy.

**The projects that support this work do not represent a consolidated workplan for a single division or team. Rather, they provide a corporate-wide view of initiatives that align with the Digital Kitchener goals and are expected to contribute to the City’s broader digital transformation efforts in 2026. Responsibility for delivery, scope, and timing varies by initiative and will remain with the relevant divisions and partners supported by Technology Innovation and Services.**

This approach supports Council’s oversight role by demonstrating how approved strategic directions are being operationalized, while maintaining flexibility to respond to emerging needs, opportunities, and partnerships. Council will receive regular updates on these, and other initiatives, throughout 2026 with staff bringing a final report with priorities for 2027 in Q4.

**Key focus areas proposed for Digital Kitchener 2.0 in 2026:**

Focus Area	Related goals in Digital Kitchener 2.0
<p><b>Explore and implement workflow automation and AI solutions that reduce time staff spend on manual and repetitive tasks allowing focus on high value work.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a connected and smart city</li> <li>• Ensure inclusive and equitable access</li> <li>• Deliver seamless digital services anytime, anywhere</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evolve Pitch Kitchener into the City’s front door for civic innovation, providing clear pathways for innovators to engage with City challenges.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate an innovative and collaborative community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explore and implement AI based solutions to improve customer service, streamline cumbersome application processes and accelerate decision making processes.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a connected and smart city</li> <li>• Ensure inclusive and equitable access</li> <li>• Advance open data for transparency and innovation</li> <li>• Deliver seamless digital services anytime, anywhere</li> </ul>

<p><b>Examine the feasibility of expanding technology loan programs through existing City facilities leveraging the City’s retired technology assets and considering the role other community service providers could play.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure inclusive and equitable access</li> <li>• Cultivate an innovative and collaborative community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strengthen partnerships with technology companies, educational institutions, and City departments to support co- creation and pilot projects.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace experimentation and city-wide innovation</li> <li>• Advance open data for transparency and innovation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partner with local organizations and support them to deliver digital and AI literacy workshops. Continue to expand free public Wi-Fi into underserved areas of the City.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure inclusive and equitable access</li> <li>• Advance open data for transparency and innovation</li> </ul>

Collectively, the projects that support these focus areas illustrate how the Digital Kitchener strategy is being used as a common framework to coordinate digital efforts, encourage collaboration, and support responsible civic innovation.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report supports Stewarding a Better City Together: Focuses on City employees as stewards of Kitchener; responsive, innovative, diverse & accountable public servants working together to serve residents; removing barriers and championing a better city and a better world.

**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:**

Community engagement was completed as part of the Digital Kitchener strategy review, which informs the priorities and themes reflected in this report.

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

**PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:**

- [COR-2026-007](#) Strategic Session: Digital Kitchener and Corporate-Wide Data Strategies
- [COR-2026-053](#) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Education Session

- [COR-2026-102](#) Digital Kitchener review final report

**APPROVED BY:** Dimetra Resendes, Acting General Manager Corporate Services

**ATTACHMENTS:** none