



Kitchener 2051

Draft Official Plan Summary

Fall 2025



Territorial Acknowledgement

The City of Kitchener is situated on the traditional territory of the Chonnonton, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee People's. We recognize our responsibility to serve as stewards for the land and honour the original caretakers who came before us. Our community is enriched by the enduring knowledge and deep-rooted traditions of the diverse First Nations, Metis and Inuit in Kitchener today.



A Pivotal Moment

**By 2051, Kitchener
will be home to
nearly 450,000
residents.**

With growth comes both challenge and opportunity.

Rising housing costs, aging infrastructure, and the realities and impacts of the climate emergency call for new ways of planning, investing, and working together. At the same time, the City continues on its journey of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and with its commitment to building a connected community where everyone feels they belong.

Kitchener's greatest strength lies in its people: a skilled and diverse population driving innovation, creativity, and care in every corner of the city. Our strong neighbourhoods, lively public spaces, and rich natural landscapes are a testament of this strength, and reflect our shared desire to stay connected to one another and to nature. Together with our vibrant arts and culture scene, colleges and universities, network of streets, trails, and transit, and dynamic downtown, these qualities make Kitchener a city where people choose to live, work, and grow.

In this moment of immense possibility, we can plan for a future that reinforces these strengths and values to build a city that works for everyone.



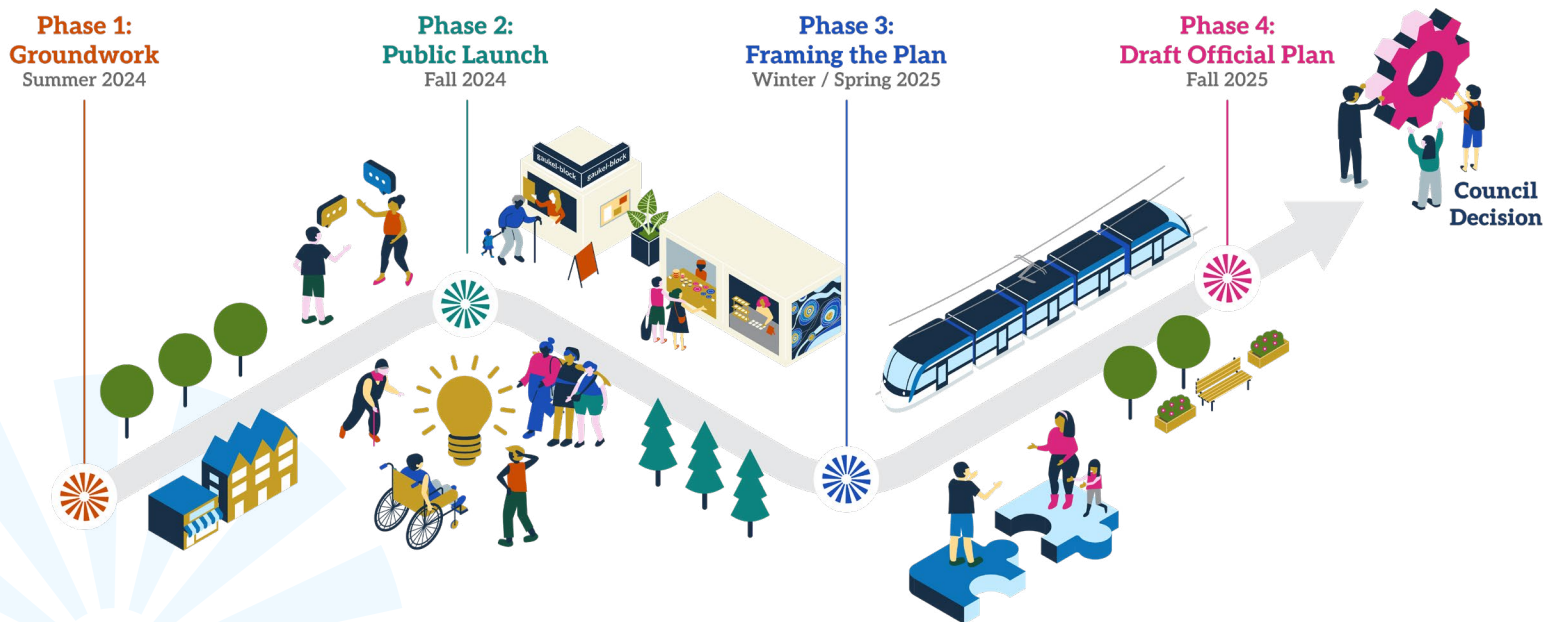
Planning Our Future, Together

Kitchener 2051 is about the people who call Kitchener home, today and in the future. It's about shaping a city that reflects who we are, what we value, and the kind of community we want to become. To do that, we needed to hear from everyone, including voices often left out of city-building conversations, including equity-denied communities, renters, youth, and people with lived and living experience of homelessness, poverty, or housing precarity.

Under Provincial Legislation, our current Official Plan, adopted in 2014, needed to be updated. We wanted to take it further and take this opportunity to reimagine our shared future, together.

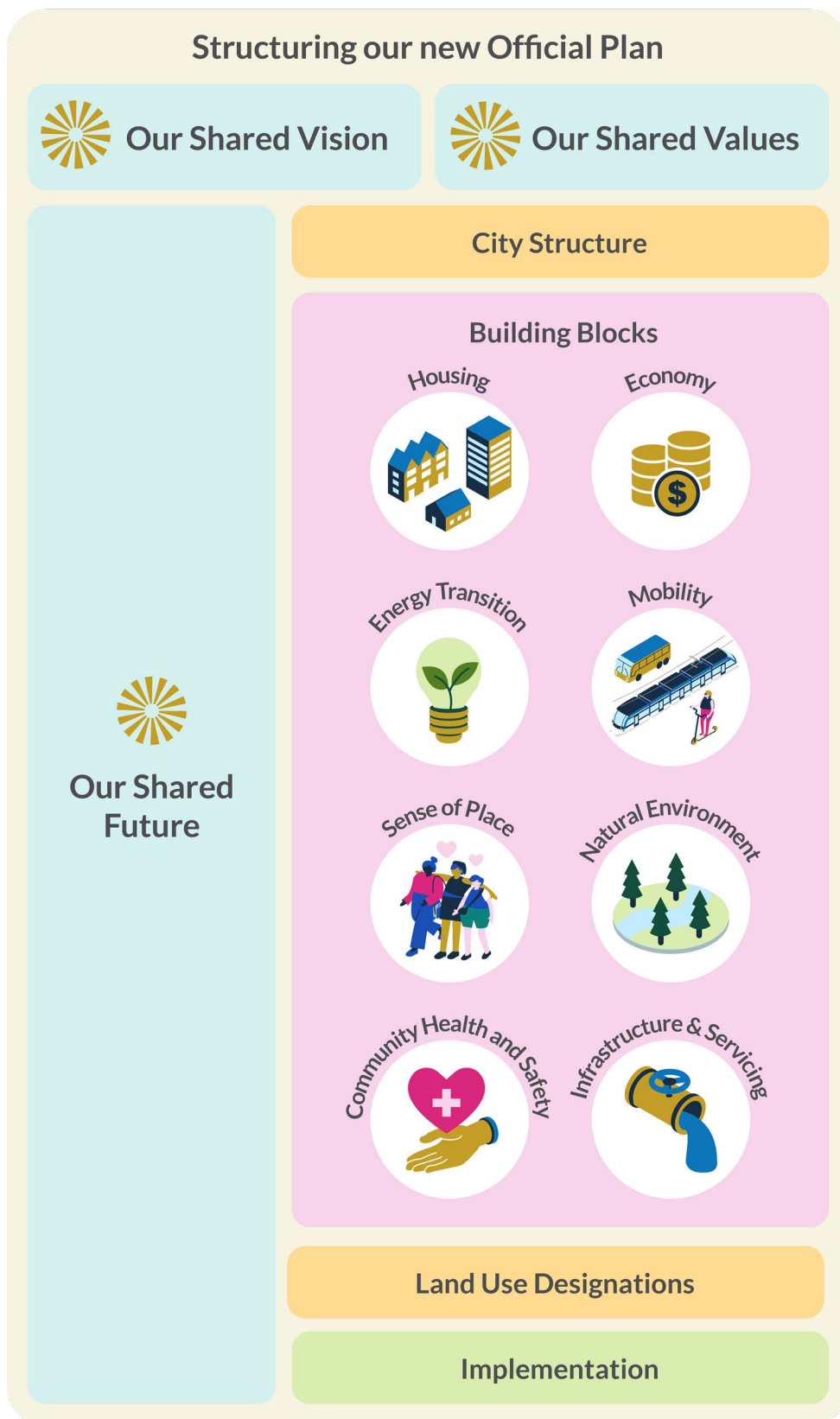
Kitchener is growing fast, and like many cities in Canada, we face challenges like housing affordability, safety for pedestrians and cyclists, inequity, climate change, and the costs of maintaining and expanding infrastructure. Yet, Kitchener also has unique strengths: vibrant neighbourhoods, a skilled and diverse workforce, new mobility technologies, and a growing desire for community connection and resilience.

Kitchener 2051 is our chance to meet these challenges head-on, and to create a roadmap for a thriving, equitable, and resilient city where everyone belongs.



Kitchener 2051 is the long-term vision for the way our city will grow and evolve to the year 2051.

Guided by our shared values and aspirations for the future, the Plan will help the City tackle the challenges of today while building the resilience needed to adapt and thrive into the future. This will be done through clear directions and policies that will guide how and where we grow – helping to shape a future Kitchener that is connected, caring, and resilient.



What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan sets the vision for what our city will look and feel like in the future, and guides the decisions that shape where people live, work, move, and connect.

Provincial law (through the Planning Act) outlines what an Official Plan does:

- Guides growth and change, especially how land and buildings are used.
- Informs decisions about land use, development, transportation, parks, and community infrastructure.
- Translates the City's vision from the Strategic Plan into on-the-ground directions for how land is used.
- Provides direction for other tools such as the City's zoning by-law.





“Building a city for everyone where, together, we take care of the world around us and each other.”



Kitchener’s future depends on both what we build and how we care for one another. Fostering mutual care and belonging is as vital to our success as new homes, jobs, and roads. When people feel connected, supported, and that they belong, our city becomes stronger and more resilient. Kitchener 2051 builds on the City’s Vision for 2043, as introduced in our Strategic Plan, to achieve this.

The theme of **A Caring City** was identified by residents as being fundamental to Kitchener’s future. This is about welcoming residents of all ages, backgrounds, and lived experiences, and reflecting and reconciling on our past while planning for a future rooted in community wellbeing, inclusion, and belonging. The new Official Plan considers and embeds this theme across all policy areas to achieve this future.

Our Shared Values



See Chapter 1 of the Draft Official Plan

Our Shared Values are shaped by the ideas, experiences, and aspirations shared by community members during the Kitchener 2051 process. Together they respond to the challenges our community faces, and reflect the priorities of a safe, equitable, connected, and resilient Kitchener:



Affordability



Access & Inclusion



Thoughtful & Resilient Growth



Safe & Sustainable Mobility Options



Mutual Care & Belonging

Our Shared Future

Our Shared Future captures the three **Big Ideas** at the heart of this Plan.

Our Neighbourhoods will be vibrant, connected, and inclusive places where people of all ages, incomes, and abilities can live, work, learn, play, connect, and move around safely and conveniently.

Our Economy will be as diverse as the city it supports, built on businesses of all types in neighbourhoods across the city. People and goods will get where they need to go quickly, efficiently and sustainably and coordinated energy and infrastructure investments will create a more competitive, economically resilient city.



We will value, protect, and restore **Our Environment**, emitting almost no greenhouse gases and building resilience to a warmer, wetter, and wilder climate.

We will learn from Indigenous land-based cultural practices and stewardship in the spirit of reconciliation to build a stronger community where everyone can be healthy, safe, and food secure for generations to come.



Where and How We Will Grow

The draft City Structure organizes Kitchener into two main categories that will work together to guide future growth and investment.

1 Places to Grow

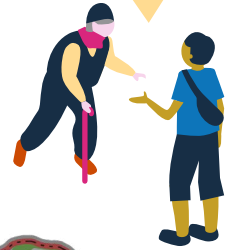
Areas that will accommodate new growth and change in the city.

2 Places to Protect

Areas that will be preserved for conservation, water management, and agricultural purposes.

What is a City Structure?

Our DRAFT City Structure puts our Shared Vision and Values into action by illustrating where and how we will accommodate **128,000 new residents** and **54,000 new jobs** by 2051, all while protecting the natural systems, greenspaces, agricultural lands and waterways that are integral to our resilience.



Our DRAFT City Structure Map

Legend

Places to Protect

- Green Areas
- The Countryside

Places to Grow

- Strategic Growth Areas
- Neighbourhood Growth Areas
- Industrial Growth Areas

Places to Focus

- *Note: Includes the Grand River

Subject to Future Study



Protected Major Transit Station Area



Transit

- Existing Transit Corridor
- Planned Transit Corridor
- Light Rail Transit Corridor
- Adapted Bus Rapid Transit Corridor
- Rapid Transit Station

Major Roads

- Existing
- Planned

Railway

- Grand River
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Area

City Structure Components

1 Places to Grow



Strategic Growth Areas

Our Strategic Growth Areas include Downtown Kitchener, new Urban Centres, and our most reliable Frequent Transit Corridors. This is where Kitchener will welcome the most growth and change in the years ahead. These areas will offer a mix of housing, employment, and community uses in complete, walkable neighbourhoods served by frequent transit and high-quality public spaces and amenities.



Neighbourhood Growth Areas

Our Neighbourhood Growth Areas recognize that every part of Kitchener will continue to evolve and grow over time. This growth will take many forms, from gentle intensification in existing neighbourhoods to new housing and amenities in greenfield areas. These areas will provide a range of homes, local jobs, shops, and services that make daily life more convenient and connected.



Industrial Growth Areas

Our Industrial Growth Areas are key places for investment, innovation, and job growth. They include lands for manufacturing, research and development, warehousing, and goods movement, along with limited supporting uses. These areas will provide space for the diverse businesses that power Kitchener's economy, offer high-quality jobs, and connect the city to regional and global markets.

2 Places to Protect



Green Areas

Our Green Areas are the foundation of Kitchener's natural heritage and recreational systems. They include parks, trails, woodlands, rivers, wetlands, and other spaces that support biodiversity, recreation, and community wellbeing. We will protect and conserve these areas, including their ecological features and functions, and support recreational opportunities for current and future generations.



The Countryside

Our Protected Countryside preserves the rural landscapes, farms, and agricultural areas that define Kitchener's southwestern edge. We will maintain and support the environmental, agricultural, and groundwater recharge functions of these areas for generations to come.

Focus Areas

Focus Areas recognize places within our City Structure that warrant more investment and collective attention. Located in both Places to Grow and Places to Protect, these are areas where the City intends to lead the co-creation of something special: places that bring people together, reflect Kitchener's diversity and vibrancy, and inspire pride in place.



See Chapter 2 of the Draft Official Plan



The Mohawk name for the Grand River, O:se Kenhionhata:tie means "Willow River," for the many willows in the watershed. The Ojibwe name for Grand River is Owaashtanong-ziibi, "the one that washes the timber down and carries away the grass and the weeds".



The Grand River: A Living Corridor

The Grand River is more than a natural landmark – it's the thread that weaves Kitchener's landscape, ecology, and history together. It provides an interconnected habitat for plants and animals, supplies clean drinking water to the region, and provides the water needed to support local farms and industries.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have made their homes along the Grand River watershed. To honour this, the City is working in partnership with Indigenous Nations, the Grand River Conservation Authority, and the broader community to honour, protect, and celebrate the Grand River as a place of deep cultural, historical, and ecological significance.



Downtown Kitchener: The Heart of the City

Downtown Kitchener (DTK) is the city’s cultural, civic, and creative core, a place that excites, supports, and unites. In DTK, sustainable streetscapes, cultural landmarks, and lively storefronts create a sense of belonging and discovery. Independent businesses thrive alongside major employers and institutions.

Accessibility, sustainability, and creativity are built into every aspect of how the downtown core operates and feels. At its core, DTK is more than a desirable destination. It’s an unmistakable feeling that even if something awesome isn’t happening right this minute, it’s just around the corner.

To achieve this, policies of the new Official Plan:

- enable the continuation of DTK as a thriving and complete neighbourhood;
- support and provide opportunities for place-making, art, music, ethnic and cultural events in DTK;
- direct major offices to the area; and
- support the location of major transportation infrastructure.



Urban Centres: Local Hubs closer to Home

Kitchener’s four Urban Centres will compliment Downtown to ensure every neighbourhood has a local “heart” that brings shops, services, community spaces, and gathering places closer to home. They will be located at:

1. Strasburg Road & Block Line Road
2. Highland Rd. West & Fischer-Hallman Rd.
3. Ottawa Street North & River Road East
4. Strasburg Road & Blair Creek Drive

To achieve this, policies of the new Official Plan:

- create the foundation and opportunity for investment within these Centres to create and expand their sense of place;
- enable more homes in these area to support more neighbours and activity; and,
- enable opportunities for shops and services, and strong public spaces like streets and plazas that connect them.

Our Building Blocks

What are Building Blocks?

The Building Blocks are the core policy chapters of the Kitchener Official Plan. They translate our Shared Vision, Values, and Future into the practical directions that guide how the City plans for and invests in housing, transportation, parks, community spaces, and infrastructure.



Each Building Block focuses on a different element of city-building, including how and where we live; how we move around; how our economy grows and evolves; how we protect and restore our natural environment; and how we nurture belonging, wellbeing, and resilience in our neighbourhoods.

While each Building Block chapter has its own focus, they are all deeply interconnected. Together, the Building Blocks reflect a commitment to thoughtful, inclusive, and resilient growth, ensuring that decisions made today contribute to the wellbeing of current and future generations.

Across all 8 Building Blocks, the themes of Caring City and Climate Action are woven carefully throughout:

- Policy snapshots marked with a **heart** ❤️ support a city where all people can access the resources they need, feel welcome and included, and live in safe, healthy homes in vibrant, well-connected neighbourhoods.
- Policy snapshots marked with a **leaf** 🌿 encourage compact growth, climate-ready design, active mobility choices, and the protection and restoration of natural areas.





Housing:

Making Kitchener a Home for Everyone

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city where everyone has a place to call home, where housing is as diverse as the people who live here, and every neighbourhood is vibrant, connected, and welcoming. Safe and stable housing of every kind – rental, ownership, supportive, family-oriented, affordable at every income level - will be part of every neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods will continue to evolve, creating a connected network of places, where people can put down roots, and build their futures.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 3 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
All residents, existing and new, have a right to stable, suitable and adequate housing	- Maintain minimum targets for developable land within the city, with a goal of building 2,100 new homes per year. - Support 9% of new homes to be affordable ownership, and 22% affordable rental annually. ♥ Affordability will include rent and ownership that is affordable to low and very low incomes including those relying on programs like ODSP and CPP.	Our Neighbourhoods
Permit and encourage a full range of housing types, sizes and tenures across the city	♥ Permit all types and homes and living arrangements in all neighbourhoods in the City. - Require that 30% of larger developments applications include housing forms other than single and semi detached.	Our Neighbourhoods
Minimize the impacts of displacing residents as a part of development	- When vacancy rates are low, limit the change from rental units to ownership through condominium conversions. - Continue to use tools like demolition control and rental replacement by-laws to encourage maintaining older, naturally occurring affordable homes. ♥ Expand tenant support services, including public information, and access to resources.	Our Neighbourhoods
Build homes where people want to be	♥ Locate homes close to community services such as schools, childcare, healthcare, libraries, parks, and transit. - Create compact, connected communities with a diverse mix of uses that allow for residents to live work and play close to home.	Our Neighbourhoods Our Environment Our Economy
Support others in building more of the homes we need	- Encourage innovative building practices like pre-fabrication and modular housing. - Seek opportunities to continue streamlining certain development approvals like pre-approved building designs and site plans. - Continuing the work done through Housing For All, Kitchener's housing strategy.	Our Neighbourhoods Our Economy



Economy:

Directing & Diversifying Economic Growth & Innovation

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city of opportunity – for everyone. A place where small shops, local makers, and major employers all thrive side by side. Rooted in creativity and innovation, Kitchener’s economy is adaptable, resilient, and people-centred, providing good jobs, dynamic local businesses, and intentional spaces where entrepreneurs, established industries, and emerging sectors can develop, evolve, and succeed. Our thriving economy helps strengthen and diversify our neighbourhoods, ensuring Kitchener’s prosperity for generations.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 4 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Ensure that residents in all neighbourhoods can access retail, services, and jobs close to home	- Where appropriate and compatible, permit a range of job opportunities in neighbourhoods. This would primarily include retail and service uses, with opportunities for small businesses to scale up close to home. - Neighbourhoods closer to higher order transit will permit a wider range of commercial uses, including offices. - Focus and build on local strengths, including proximity to multiple universities and colleges.	Our Economy Our Neighbourhoods
Protect Employment Growth Areas	- Limit changing land within these areas to non-industrial uses. - Establishes a buffer from conflicting, sensitive land uses like homes.	Our Economy
Plan for the future of businesses and equitable work	Implement the Economic Development Strategy, which monitors and anticipates economic trends to ensure the city is well positioned to attract, retain and develop talent.	Our Economy
Connect people and goods with an effective mobility network	Encourage a mix of uses and compact built forms that are conducive to transit and active transportation, so that people who work in Kitchener are able to walk, roll, cycle or take a bus/light rail to work instead of driving.	Our Economy Our Neighbourhoods Our Environment
Support a thriving local food system	- Support growing of local food and medicine gardens for personal and commercial consumption within neighbourhoods. - Shared food processing facilities will be permitted. - By-laws will be reviewed to support the use of public spaces and under-utilized lots as locations for temporary food markets.	Our Economy Our Neighbourhoods Our Environment



Energy Transition:

Powering a Prosperous Kitchener

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city powered by clean, efficient, and affordable energy. Homes, businesses, and transportation systems run on renewable sources that reduce emissions, keep costs low, and are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. By integrating energy planning into how we plan our neighbourhoods, how we move, and how our local economy grows, Kitchener is leading the transition towards a net-zero future that benefits everyone.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 5 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Transition to an efficient, resilient, net-zero emissions, clean-energy community	- Collect waste heat can from industry, wastewater and data centres to use in power thermal networks to heat our homes and businesses. - Support geothermal, solar, wind and other zero emission energy sources. - Support local energy storage at various scales throughout the city.	Our Environment
Increase our community's resilience to a changing climate	- Make the best use of natural environmental features to reduce the potential impact of climate hazards like flooding or extreme heat. - Encourage low impact development, working with nature to supplement traditional infrastructure. - Provide spaces and connected routes for communities to seek emergency shelter, including cooling or warming centres. - Undertake a climate risk vulnerability assessment to inform future policy changes.	Our Environment
Promote net zero new buildings	- Incentivize efficient buildings that are energy efficient, sustainably built and resilient to climate impacts. - Fast track development approvals for climate-ready development.	Our Environment Our Neighbourhoods
Reduce air pollution caused by burning fossil fuels	- New neighbourhoods, development, and infrastructure will aim to not use fossil fuels for heating. - Explore opportunities for fossil fuel infrastructure decommissioning. - Promote low-carbon transportation like transit or cycling.	Our Environment Our Neighbourhoods



Natural Environment:

Conserving & Strengthening Nature in the City

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city of interconnected ecosystems, supporting the people, plants, and animals who call the city home. Stewardship is shared across generations, and our natural areas are cared for as essential living systems that sustain clean water, habitat, recreation, gathering, and belonging. Protecting, restoring, enhancing and expanding these natural systems and green spaces help to connect us to each another and to the land.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 6 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Protect and maintain the Natural Heritage System and ensure there is no decrease in the quality and quantity of its features	- Support ongoing monitoring and management of Kitchener's Natural Heritage System. - Prohibit development that impacts key local, regional, and provincially significant features, including wetlands, valleys, woodlands, and the habitats of endangered and threatened species. - Promote informed stewardship and community involvement in natural heritage maintenance and enhancement.	Our Environment
Protect, restore, and enhance the ecological/hydrological functions and biodiversity of the Natural Heritage System	Restore channelized and buried creeks to ecologically vibrant streams, both through city project and private development.	Our Environment
Manage our water using the watershed as the ecologically meaningful scale for long-term planning	- Protect Regional Recharge areas for their role in contributing to the Waterloo Moraine, the primary source for drinking water within the City. - Require a subwatershed plan prior to greenfield land use planning to ensure the ecological function of a portion of the watershed and ensure there are no negative impacts on groundwater supply.	Our Environment



Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Protect, manage and enhance the urban forest	- Continue to prioritize the conservation and enhancement of Kitchener's urban tree canopy at the city and neighbourhood level. - Manage, maintain and enhance trees along City streets, parks and other City lands. - Protect City trees and require compensation for any public tree removed or damaged due to development. - Protect private trees through the development process and require justification for any proposed tree removal.	Our Environment Our Neighbourhoods
Contribute to climate resilience	 Protect, enhance, and expand the urban forest on both public and private lands as a key strategy for climate adaptation. This includes preserving and increasing tree canopy coverage, promoting diverse and climate-resilient species, and maintaining / increasing carbon stores in the urban forest.  When planting trees, select species that are resilient to climate change, suitable to site conditions and are important to Indigenous communities.	Our Environment
Commit to the conservation of a healthy and resilient Natural Heritage System contributing to Kitchener residents' quality of life and sense of place	 Ensure heritage landscapes, including the Grand River, are preserved for the long term enjoyment and cultural use.  Maintain trees and vegetation, where appropriate, in an effort to preserve the natural aesthetic and cultural heritage of the city.	Our Environment Our Neighbourhoods



Sense of Place: Supporting Community Connection

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city where the stories, perspectives, and histories of our people and communities are woven into the spaces we share. These places invite us to gather, celebrate, learn from one another, and see ourselves reflected in the city. By honouring what makes Kitchener unique, and supporting the preservation and creation of inclusive, welcoming, and joyful places and landscapes, the city continues to grow in ways that foster connection, care, and a collective sense of belonging.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 7 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Ensure that Kitchener builds upon its historic roots as it grows	♥ Designate and protect cultural heritage resources. ♥ Work with Rightsholders and Urban Indigenous communities and consider their interests in managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources. • Use thoughtful built form, cultural expression, public art, and heritage conservation in new development. • Take financial securities to ensure cultural heritage features are not damaged during major renovations.	Our Neighbourhoods
Achieve a strong sense of place that is culturally vibrant, lively, functional, inclusive and accessible, to support physical and emotional wellbeing	♥ Incorporate barrier-free and universal accessibility into private development, city projects, and all public spaces. • Human-scaled design to be applied in public features like lighting, art, and seating. • Encourage and support the provision of public art in private and public developments. • Preserve and enhance landmarks, views and vistas. ♥ Require amenity spaces as a part of development that is provided both indoors and outdoors and will be safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. • Hold privately-operated public spaces to a high standard of design, including accessibility, safety, flexibility of use, and upkeep.	Our Neighbourhoods
Plan for parks and community spaces that cultivate mutual care and belonging	♥ Prioritize equitable use and access of public spaces like parks and community facilities. ♥ Plan for community facilities to meet the needs of our community. ♥ Integrate new parks and community spaces into neighbourhoods in a manner that ensures equitable access for each neighbourhood and by all community members.	Our Neighbourhoods Our Environment Our Economy



Mobility:

Enabling Safe, Accessible, & Integrated Travel

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city where everyone, regardless of age, income, or ability, can move in and around the city safely, comfortably, and conveniently. Our streets, sidewalks, paths, and transit network are designed for people first, making walking, rolling, cycling, and transit the preferred options for getting around. Parking and goods movement have been rethought, reducing the environmental, financial, and land use impacts of both private and commercial vehicles. By recognizing that how and where we live is directly tied to how we chose to move around and planning and designing our city accordingly, Kitchener supports healthier communities, reduces emissions, and makes travel easier and more enjoyable for everyone.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 8 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Continue to build an accessible, integrated mobility network that allows for safe, convenient, and affordable movement across the city	- Apply the City's Complete Streets Guidelines to ensure access to all road users. ♥ Support the city's Vision Zero strategy to eliminate serious traffic-related injuries and deaths by implementing traffic calming and other safety measures.	Our Economy Our Neighbourhoods Our environment
Make walking, rolling, cycling, and taking transit safe, comfortable, and connected throughout the year	♥ Ensure new city infrastructure is accessible for people of all areas and abilities. - Secure active transportation infrastructure through development applications. - Prioritize continuous, connected pathways.	Our Economy Our Environment
Facilitate the movement of goods throughout the City to support job growth and access to goods	- Support innovative, sustainable delivery practices including zero emissions last mile delivery zones. - Collaborate with the Region of Waterloo to direct goods movement to regional roads.	Our Environment Our Economy
Design our city such that most trips can be achieved by active transportation and public transit, and the remaining vehicle trips do not emit greenhouse gases	- Support Integrate measures like car sharing, bike sharing, carpool spaces, electric vehicle charging stations and bicycle parking with new development. - Layout new streets and corridors in a way that is conducive to public transit. - Permit closing streets to vehicles to encourage active transportation and community building.	Our Neighbourhoods Our Environment



Infrastructure & Servicing:

Supporting Growth through Re-investment

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city with reliable and resilient infrastructure – with efficient and affordable systems ready to support daily life. These thoughtfully planned systems ensure we have clean drinking water, well-managed waste and stormwater, and reliable access to the electricity, digital and telecommunications networks needed to stay connected. We make the best use of what we already have, planning new growth where infrastructure already exists or can be easily upgraded, and integrating green infrastructure (landscape features that help manage stormwater runoff) into parks, open spaces, and streets. Together, these systems provide the foundation for a healthy, connected, and resilient city.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 9 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Provide infrastructure in a coordinated, efficient and cost-effective manner to meet the City's current and projected needs	- Permit infrastructure and utilities that are required to service the public in all land uses. - Require that proposals to build infrastructure in or near natural heritage systems demonstrate that there will be no harm to ecological functions or alternatives are not feasible. - Direct for public water and sewage services as the preferred method of servicing, but permit private and communal wells and septic systems in appropriate scenarios.	Our Economy Our Environment
Maximize the use of existing municipal infrastructure before consideration is given to extending and/or developing new municipal infrastructure	- Infrastructure will follow the phasing policies of the plan, and will not support development that is inefficient, or goes beyond currently designated growth areas. - Require that new development show demand and capacity of current servicing infrastructure. Where it cannot be accommodated, the cost of upgrading the infrastructure will be the responsibility of the applicant.	Our Neighbourhoods Our Economy Our Environment
Ensure coordination and efficient planning and management of private, City, Regional, Provincial and Federal infrastructure	The City will work with the surrounding cities and townships, as well as the region and province to ensure that service demand is met.	Our Environment Our Neighbourhoods



Community Health and Safety:

Protecting People & Resources

What does it mean to Kitchener?

In 2051, Kitchener is a city where the health and well-being of the community and our natural systems are deeply connected. Our rivers, woodlands, wetlands, groundwater sources, and the clean drinking water, habitat, biodiversity, shade, and opportunities for recreation and connection they provide, are recognized as essential to our quality of life. As a result, this 'natural infrastructure' is preserved, protected, restored, and enhanced. By caring for the lands and waters that sustain us, we are caring for our people and our planet and protecting our shared resources for generations to come.

Objectives and Highlights



See Chapter 10 of the Draft Official Plan

Objectives/Directions	Policy Snapshot	Our Shared Future Theme(s)
Promote water conservation and water use efficiency	- Encourage green infrastructure and low impact development so that land use planning and infrastructure decisions support the sustained function of surface and groundwater resources. - Regulate land uses that have the potential to contaminate the water supply.	Our Environment
Protect residents and property from harm due to natural hazards	- The impacts of climate change have been considered when reviewing hazardous lands and will be factored into evaluating development applications. - Prohibit development in areas that are at risk of flooding or erosion. This includes development that would impact wetlands and other ecosystem services that limit the impact of flooding.	Our Environment
Protect economically vital industrial uses and maintain the quality of life for Kitchener residents	- Generally prohibit sensitive land uses like residential, or institutional uses (e.g., hospitals) within a reasonable buffer of industrial areas to allow for these industries to continue to operate and grow without impacting residents. - Continue to protect the economic viability and long term operations of the Region of Waterloo International Airport through policies that ensure land use compatibility is assessed and hazards avoided and mitigated. - Require development on or near contaminated sites to assess the need for remediation or consider the risk to the proposed use.	Our Environment Our Economy

Land Use Designations



See Chapter 11 of the Draft Official Plan

What are Land Use Designations?

Land Use Designations are important implementation tools for achieving Our Shared Vision for the future. They tell us what uses are allowed to be built where, and how new buildings should look and feel.

Our draft Land Use Designations set out the overall direction, vision, and objectives for areas within each City Structure component.

They describe the types of homes, jobs, shops, and services that can be built in different areas of the city to plan for the future in a cohesive and compatible way.



Our DRAFT Land Use Designations Map

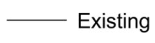
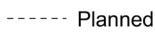
Legend

-  Area Under Deferral/Subject to Future Study
-  Mixed Use A
-  Mixed Use B
-  Mixed Use C
-  Innovation Employment
-  Neighbourhood
-  Institutional
-  Commercial First
-  Auto-oriented Commercial
-  General Industrial
-  Heavy Industrial
-  Natural Heritage Conservation
-  Open Space
-  Prime Agriculture
-  Major Infrastructure and Utilities

Railway



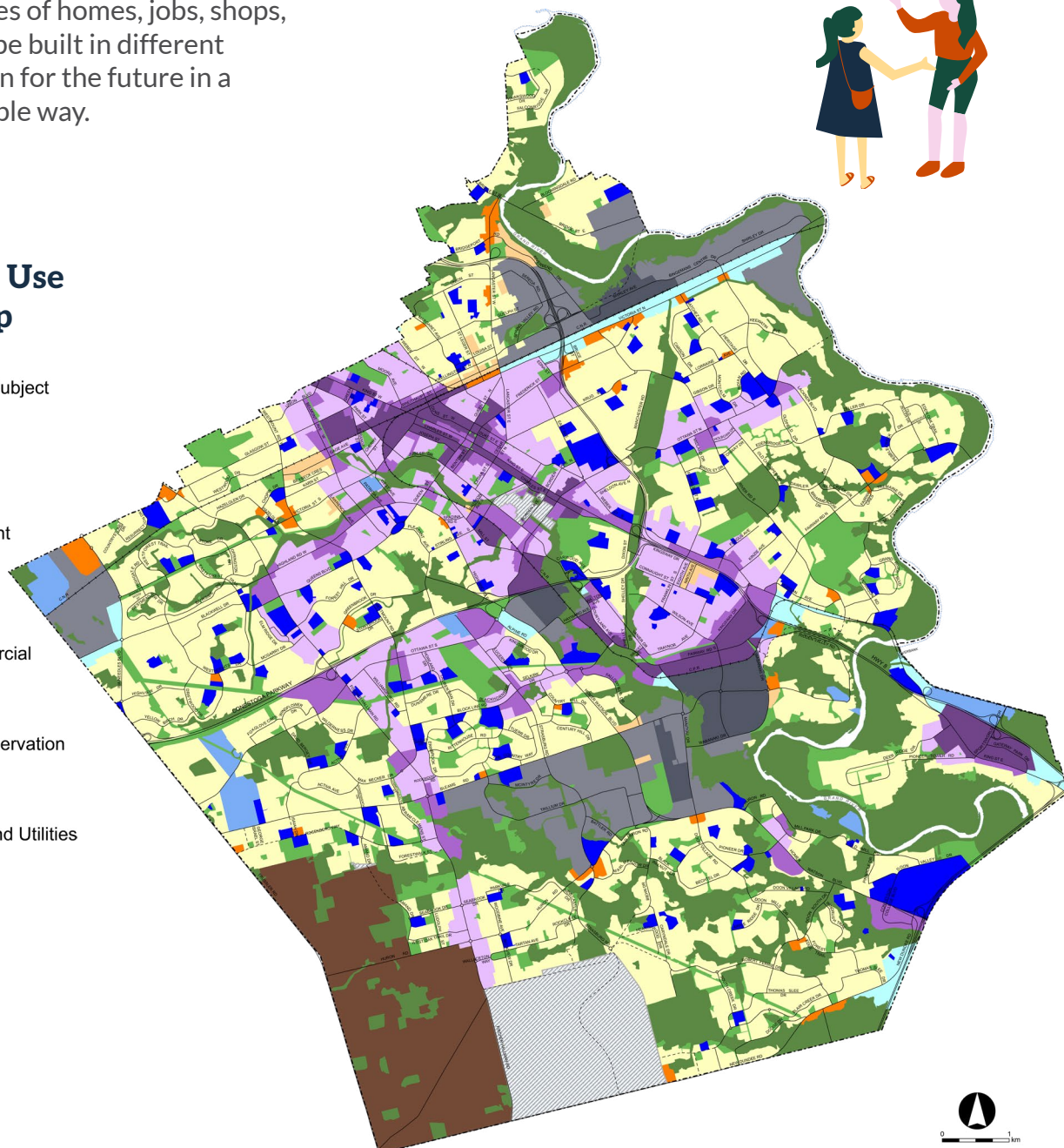
Major and Minor Roads

-  Existing
-  Planned

Municipal Boundary



Grand River



Land Use Designations

Natural Heritage Conservation

These are the places where nature comes first. Forests, wetlands, valleys, and waterways are protected so the ecosystems, species, and natural processes they support can continue to thrive. By preserving Natural Heritage areas, we safeguard clean water, promote biodiversity, protect critical habitat, keep our communities safe from natural hazards, and ensure the cherished natural spaces that make Kitchener special are here for generations to come.

Prime Agriculture

These are the landscapes that sustain us, where food is grown and harvested, soil is cared for, and agricultural traditions span generations. Prime Agriculture areas protect the farmland and rural environments outside of the urban boundary around Kitchener, accommodating a range of agriculture and agricultural-related uses, ensuring farmers can continue working the land, and local food systems can continue to thrive. By keeping these lands intact and productive, we support the health of our community today and preserve the ability to feed future generations.

Open Space

These are the places where we gather, play, recharge, reflect, and connect with nature and with each other. These parks, trails, and natural areas are protected so they remain accessible and open to everyone, ensuring that every neighbourhood has places where people can spend time outdoors, build connections, and feel part of the community.

Mixed Use Overview

These are growing centres of activity, culture, and belonging, walkable, transit-supported areas with homes of all kinds located alongside local businesses, services, and community spaces. In Mixed Use areas, you can pick up groceries, grab lunch, go to the dentist, and meet up with friends, all without needing a car. Designed with walking, rolling, cycling, and transit in mind, these areas are dynamic urban places that continue to evolve while remaining rooted in the communities around them.

Mixed Use A

These areas will grow in ways you notice slowly: a new coffee shop in the old Victorian house on the corner, a duplex where a single-family home once stood, more people walking and rolling to local parks, schools, and community centres. Buildings of up to 8 storeys are permitted, and new homes, and amenities are added thoughtfully and gradually, so they evolve while still feeling familiar.

Mixed Use B

These areas will feel a bit more urban, with buildings of up to 28 storeys line the main streets to bring more people closer to their daily needs. These are walkable neighbourhoods with cafés, clinics, workplaces, and homes layered together, creating lively streets that still feel connected to nearby low-rise areas.

Mixed Use C

These areas are some of the most vibrant and connected areas in the city. They will continue to grow in this way, with high-rise homes, public transit, jobs, shops, and public spaces meet. They will be lively, welcoming districts that support daily activity from residents, workers, and visitors.

Commercial First

These are places where both locals and those from across the city come to grab groceries, get a haircut, try on a new sweater, or share a meal with friends. By prioritizing commercial uses, especially essential ones like grocery stores, and allowing buildings with homes up to 12 storeys, these areas support a strong local economy and create the familiar hubs that anchor daily life.

Auto-Oriented Commercial

Some commercial businesses need more space than others. Auto-Oriented Commercial areas provide the much-needed space for showrooms, equipment storage, and loading and deliveries, helping support the local economy while keeping these activities, and their impacts, separate from residential neighbourhoods and more walkable, pedestrian-focused areas.

Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood areas will allow for a diverse mix of homes and smaller, community-serving shops and services so that people can access what they need close to where they live. As these areas evolve, new housing, shops, services, and amenities will be thoughtfully introduced, complementing what's already there through new low- and mid-rise buildings between 1-6 storeys. This will help us welcome new neighbours, new housing types, and new amenities in ways that ensure our neighbourhoods remain familiar, comfortable, and connected to the people who call them home.

Institutional

These areas are the places where people come together to learn, gather, celebrate, reflect, receive care, access social supports, and build community. From schools and libraries to community centres, cultural spaces, healthcare facilities and places of worship, Institutional areas ensure that every neighbourhood has access to the spaces and services that support community connection, care, and inclusion. Residential care facilities and affordable housing will also be permitted in these areas.

Innovation Employment

Kitchener has always been a city of makers. Innovation Employment areas will carry that legacy forward by providing space for studios, workshops, research hubs, test kitchens, fabrication, cultural uses, and other employment-generating activities that thrive in flexible, adaptive buildings. They will support jobs that are compatible with housing closer to where they live.

Industrial

These areas, including both General and Heavy Industrial designations, form the foundation of Kitchener's economy, where goods are made, stored, and moved. They provide the space and infrastructure needed for manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, and other production related uses. Noise, vibration, or other impacts make it necessary for these areas to be located away from residential and other sensitive uses. Protecting these lands will ensure there is room for new and growing businesses, keeping jobs in the city, so Kitchener can continue to be a place where people can both live and work into the future.

Major Infrastructure & Utilities

These sites are the places that keep Kitchener running, where we manage our power, treat water and waste, store materials, and run city operations. Major Infrastructure and Utilities facilities are essential, but because they can also be large, loud or unsightly, they are often in locations that are well planned and separated from surrounding communities.

Implementation

Plans are only successful if they can be put into action. The Official Plan articulates our shared vision for how Kitchener will grow and change, but it is the tools, partnerships, ongoing monitoring, and day-to-day decisions that will help turn this vision into reality.

Our Toolbox

Secondary Plans provide area-specific directions to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the Official Plan at neighbourhood-level, with area-specific directions on land use, mobility, open space, and urban design.

The Zoning Bylaw translates the broader objectives and policies of the Official Plan into specific, property-level rules that regulate the use, size, height, density and location of buildings.

Urban Design Guidelines provide detailed design guidance neighbourhoods, and specific sites and/or building types to support interpretation of the Official Plan.

Community Improvement Plans (CIP) enable the use of different programs, partnerships, or financial incentives to improve or enhance properties or land within Community Improvement Areas, being places in the city identified as needing additional attention or support.

Topic-Specific Plans & Strategies help coordinate long-term planning and investments in key areas such as Transportation, Housing, Climate, Parks, Arts & Culture, Natural Heritage, and Reconciliation. These plans augment the directions set out in the Official Plan to help ensure growth is supported by the necessary social and physical infrastructure.

Tracking What's Important

A key part of implementing our Official Plan is to regularly track progress to ensure that we are moving towards achieving our Shared Future. To do so, we have developed the following DRAFT indicators which relate to one or more of our Big Ideas.

More sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, and trails are added to our existing mobility network.

Increased development in Strategic Growth Areas.

Most of the homes built each year are within the already built up area of the city

Reduced consumption and waste of materials and resources.

More people spend less of their household income on housing and transportation costs.

Greater diversity of housing options, including type and tenure.

More people have reliable access to a variety of food sources.

More people have access to recreational facilities and programs or participate in community events.

More people use public transit or active modes of transport during peak commuting hours.

More residents are able to access daily needs within a walkable distance.

Residents and businesses have reduced greenhouse gas emissions and energy use.





Tell Us What You Think!

We want to make sure the Final Official Plan reflects the priorities, experiences, and hopes of the community. Please take the Kitchener 2051 Draft Official Plan Survey to tell us what you like, what's missing, and what might need more work as we prepare the Final Official Plan.



Scan the QR Code

or visit: <https://www.engagewr.ca/kitchener2051>

