Spring 2025

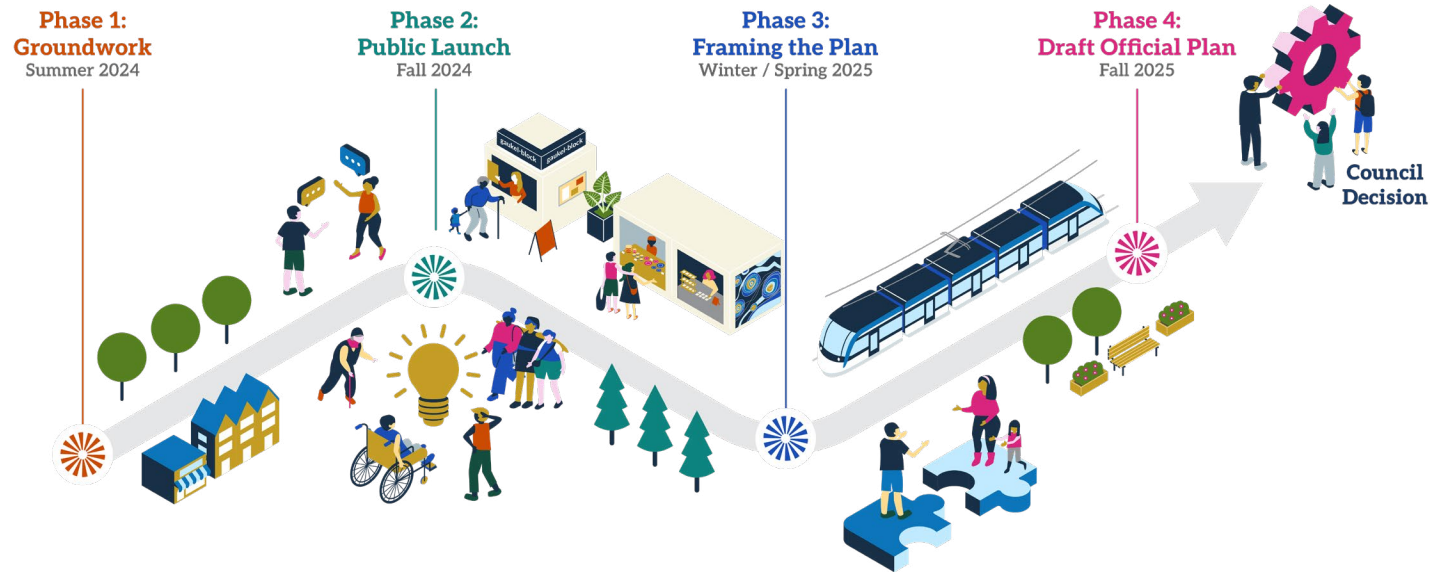
Community Conversation Kits

Draft Big Ideas & Emerging Directions

Kitchener 2051

KITCHENER

We have some big ideas for Kitchener's new Official Plan!



The City of Kitchener is writing a new Official Plan called Kitchener 2051 – and we need to hear from you!

Kitchener 2051 is about reflecting and implementing shared community priorities and directions. These priorities and directions will guide Kitchener's development over the next 25 years and beyond in support of our vision of *building a city for everyone where, together, we take care of the world around us and each other*.

Our Official Plan is a tool that contains policies and maps that guide where housing, jobs, and streets are built, protect our natural areas, and guide investments in community services and facilities. Kitchener's Official Plan has positively shaped growth and development across the city over the last decade. A new Official Plan is needed to respond to current and future conditions and trends.

Kitchener 2051 presents an opportunity to tackle these issues head-on, ask big questions, and prepare for the future. It will work together with other recently completed plans, such as Housing for All, Places & Spaces, and the Cycling and Trails Master Plan, to set out a forward-thinking and contemporary policy framework.

Since Fall 2024, we have had conversations with over 2,000 residents and collaborators as we launched Kitchener 2051 asking the question - how can the changes unfolding in our community over the next 25 years benefit everyone?

These conversations have been framed by four themes from our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan:

- **A Connected City:** how we move and how we grow.
- **A Thriving City:** how we live and ensure a prosperous future for all.
- **A Green City:** how we care for the earth and each other.
- **A Caring City:** how we come together to plan and build for individual and collective wellbeing.

SCAN ME

To read the "What We Heard" Report which summarizes community input to-date, scan the QR code or visit EngageWR.ca/Kitchener2051.

Developing Our Big Ideas and Emerging Directions

A first step in framing a new Official Plan for Kitchener was to develop the Big Ideas – the main aspirations for a new Official Plan. The Big Ideas reflect what we learned in Phases 1 and 2, as well as preliminary findings from the various Kitchener 2051 technical reports and direction from existing City plans and strategies. We have also developed a series of emerging directions. These are different paths we can take to bring our big ideas to life.

SCAN ME

To read our Community Backgrounders on the technical reports, scan the QR code or visit EngageWR.ca/Kitchener2051.

What is a Community Conversation Kit?

The Community Conversation Kit has been designed to to understand your thoughts and priorities when it comes to these Big Ideas and Emerging Direction through an interactive discussion with people in your community. This could be your book club, softball team, co-workers, friends, faith community or neighbours – really any group that you would like to share ideas and have a conversation with. It works best in groups of 4-8. Your feedback on these will help shape the draft policies of the Official Plan.

Our DRAFT Big Ideas are on Page 4. Comments on the DRAFT Big Ideas are encouraged but do not need to be the focus of your group's discussion. They can be done independently and submitted as part of your conversation kit or sent individually to the City.

The **100 Points for Emerging Directions Exercise** starts on Page 6. Please use your time to work through this together.

How to run a Conversation Kit Session?

If you are the host:

1. Consider ordering some food for your group (first 50 kits to be submitted will be reimbursed up to $30, see instructions below).
2. Host your conversation using the instructions and helpful tips provided throughout this kit.
3. Record the group's thoughts and feedback in this conversation kit as clearly as possible. It's ok to keep it to the main ideas, areas or agreement or points of tension. Don't try to capture every word.
4. Submit completed conversation kits anytime up to June 8, 2025 by:

   Emailing it to kitchener2051@kitchener.ca

   OR

   Dropping it off in person at any of the following locations:

   - Kitchener City Hall – 200 King Street West
   - Any Community Centre
   - Any Kitchener Public Library Branch

   Please make sure that the Conversation Kit is in an envelope marked to:

   Attention: Planning and Housing Policy
   Kitchener City Hall – 200 King Street West
   6th Floor

Grab a Slice!

The first 50 Kit submissions will be reimbursed up to $30 for food purchased by the host for the group. To be reimbursed, please submit a clear photo of your reciept along with your Conversation Kit.

Be sure to check the project website to see if we are still offering reimbursement before ordering.

DRAFT Big Ideas

What do we mean by Big Ideas?

Our big ideas are the north star guiding our desired future. They will shape the policies of our new Official Plan and preferred approach to planning for growth across our city. They reflect our Community Values, which were developed based on your input in Phase 1 and 2 of the process.

DRAFT Big Idea – Our Neighbourhoods

If you live in Kitchener or would like to live here, if you rent or own, if you live alone or with others, if you need care or assistance - there will always be a home for you here.

You and your family, however you define it, will be able to make a home in any of Kitchener's neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhoods will be places where the community can connect, where people of all ages can learn and play, and where shops and services are close by.

DRAFT Big Idea – Our Economy

Our economy will be built on businesses of all types in neighbourhoods across the city: from shops and services, to industry, innovation hubs, and offices. Residents and goods will get where they need to go quickly, efficiently and sustainably. Coordinated energy and infrastructure investments in business across the city will create a more competitive, resilient economy.

DRAFT Big Idea – Our Environment

We value, protect and conserve our natural environment so that Kitchener is a place where you and your family can be safe, healthy, and comfortable for generations to come. Kitchener will emit almost no greenhouse gases and our communities, built and natural environments will be ready for hotter days and more intense storms. We will learn from Indigenous land-based cultural practices and stewardship in the spirit of reconciliation to build a stronger community, based on a mutual understanding of each other and the environment.

Is there anything you'd like to share about the DRAFT Big Ideas? What did you like? Could it be improved?

100 Points for Emerging Directions Exercise

Emerging directions are different paths we can take to shape our big ideas. They are NOT actions. Rather they help provide focus on specific areas so that as we work to implement our Official Plan they act as guideposts to develop detailed, concrete actions.

There are 18 emerging directions. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather focused on areas that need further discussion. Through these community conversations, we want to understand how important and meaningful each one of these directions are to you.

As a group:

1. Read through the emerging directions.
2. Discuss what they mean and why they are important to you. You might find it helpful to use the conversation starters provided below each Emerging Direction to keep the conversation going. Other questions to consider are:
   - Why does this emerging direction resonate?
   - What would be an action that could come from it?
3. You have a total of 100 points to distribute amongst the 18 emerging directions. Working together, distribute a portion of your 100 points to each emerging direction. The more points you give to an emerging direction the more important/meaningful it is to you. It may be helpful to use physical items as counters, like paper dots, jelly beans, gaming tokens.
4. Take notes on your discussions and your reflections on the activity on Page 8 (following the table).
5. Don't forget to fill out the Demographic Survey and the Meal Reimbursment Form before sending back your package!

#	Emerging Direction	Points
1 ●	Use all the tools that Kitchener has, and build on relationships with other orders of government and private sector collaborators, to continue to support the expansion, preservation, and creation of affordable homes to meet the needs of existing and future residents. *Think about – What are ways we can focus on housing affordability? How can we avoid a re-occuring housing affordability crisis?*	
2 ●	Establish an affordable housing target. *Think about – How can we measure our progress on having affordable housing for everyone in our City? What might a target help us achieve or measure?*	
3 ●	Allow housing choices in all neighbourhoods – from houses to apartments, rental and ownership, market and affordable – to meet the needs of existing and future residents. *Think about – What type of homes have you lived in already and what type of home may you need in the future? Maybe stairs are difficult. Maybe you need a home that fits your extended family.*	
4 ●	Create strong neighbourhoods by promoting human connection. *Think about – What ways were you able to maintain connections with people during the COVID-19 pandemic? Where in your neighbourhood do you go to spend time with others (e.g., parks, libraries, a place of worship, your neighbours' backyard)?*	
5 ● ●	Plan for more people in neighbourhoods to increase mobility choice, more shops, and more services closer to homes. *Think about – If you could have any shop or service closer to home what would it be?*	
6 ●	Ensure that while new homes are added in neighbourhoods, displacement of lower income and marginalized households is minimized. *Think about – Do remember a time when you or a loved one had to leave your home sooner than you or they wanted? How did it affect affordability and/or connection to community?*	
7 ● ●	Permit small-scale and compatible commercial and service uses in neighbourhoods. *Think about – How long does it take you to walk from your home to get a coffee? To the doctor's office?*	
8 ●	Ensure that goods can move around Kitchener and get where they need to go easily and quickly. *Think about – Are there trips that you can make by walking, biking, or taking transit, instead of driving? Reducing car trips leaves more room on the roads for trucks to get around efficiently.*	
9 ●	Creating conditions that attract the employers and industries of tomorrow and play to Kitchener's economic strengths. *Think about – What can the City do today to ensure good jobs and a vibrant economy 25 years from now?*	

#	Emerging Direction	Points
10 ●	Allow industrial uses that don't need to be located away from homes in more places throughout the city. *Think about – Where might there be opportunities to grow our local economy throughout Kitchener to provide more industrial-type jobs? What do we need to be mindful of?*	
11 ●	Protect and grow existing employment areas for industries that needs lots of land or create noise, dust, vibrations, or odours. *Think about – Employment Lands with industrial uses can't be located close to where people live, as they can be noisy, produce odours, have lots of truck trips, or all of the above. How can the City improve getting to and from jobs in these areas since they're further from where people live?*	
12 ● ●	Direct major offices close to ION station stops or other areas with frequent transit. *Think about – What are some benefits to having larger offices near ION stations?*	
13 ● ●	Our transportation network includes safe, comfortable, and accessible active transportation routes. *Think about – Separated and protected facilities for walking, wheeling, and cycling.*	
14 ●	As neighbourhoods change they should consider the impacts of a changing climate. *Think about – More trees to provide shade; areas within neighbourhoods to escape from extreme weather (e.g., spaces like libraries or community centers or treed parks).*	
15 ●	Use data about climate risks and vulnerable neighbourhoods to inform decisions on city infrastructure to reduce urban heat and flood risk. *Think about – How can we prioritize investments over the next 25 years to help protect people and property from the worst impacts of climate change.*	
16 ●	Continue to naturalize stormwater channels and ponds and integrate these spaces with recreation opportunities. *Think about – Henry Sturm Creek in Victoria Hills and Montgomery Creek near Wilson Park.*	
17 ● ●	Prioritize the local food system by seeking opportunities for urban agriculture, low-barrier food production, processing and food retail. *Think about – If you've tried to 'localize' some of your food buying decisions over the last few months, how has the food system been able to accommodate that?*	
18 ●	Recognize the value and significance of Kitchener's Natural Heritage System. *Think about - The Grand River valley and special places along Strasburg Creek such as Brigadoon and Wards Ponds and the Huron Natural Area.*	
	Total Points	0

Connecting back to our Big Ideas:

● Our Neighbourhood ● Our Economy ● Our Environment

Overall, what were some thoughts shared on why specific emerging directions resonated?

What were some actions that were discussed?

Describe why the group assigned the points in the way that they did. Were there areas of debate? Is so, describe them.

Create A Refund Vendor

Please note that * indicates that the field is mandatory.

Please provide the reason for the refund * :

Community Engagement: Kitchener 2051 Conversation Kit - Food Reimbursement

Company/Vendor * : _____

Contact Name : _____

Address * : _____

City * : _____

Province/State * : _____

Postal Code * : _____

Telephone : _____ **EXT :** _____

Mobile : _____

Email * : _____

Please provide payment address, if different than the address above :

_____

Company Code : 1000 City of Kitchener - Default

Currency : CAD - Default

Incoterms : FOB DESTINATION - Default

Terms of Payment : Net 0 - Zero

Submitted By : Elyssa Pompa

Date * : _____

Demographic Survey

Tell us about yourself!

We are asking these demographic questions to better understand who takes our online surveys and who might be missing. This is important when assessing equity, diversity and inclusion in the decision-making process. Your answers will be kept confidential and are available only to City of Kitchener. The survey results will be reported all together in one large group (aggregated) and in such a way that no one person can be identified.

Answering the questions below is voluntary. You do not have to answer if you do not want to.

The personal information is collected according to s. 28(2) of Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and will be used by the City of Kitchener to inform policy decisions. If you have questions about this notice of collection, please contact Sue Weare, sue.weare@kitchener.ca, 519-741-2200 ext. 7058.

1. Indicate the number of people participated in the conversation for each age group.

Under 18 years old : _____

18–29 years old : _____

30–39 years old : _____

40–49 years old : _____

50–59 years old : _____

60–64 years old : _____

65 years old and above : _____

Prefer not to answer : _____

2. What are the first three digits of your postal code?

- ☐ N2A
- ☐ N2B
- ☐ N2C
- ☐ N2E
- ☐ N2G
- ☐ N2H
- ☐ N2M
- ☐ N2N
- ☐ N2P
- ☐ N2R
- ☐ Other : _____