

Community Priority: Leadership and Community Engagement

Citizen's Leadership and Community Engagement Vision, 2027

“Our shared vision is for Kitchener to be a community in which the residents are engaged and active in decision making about local issues.”

Keeping our local government connected to a constantly evolving community requires strong and visionary leadership - leadership that fosters an open and understandable decision-making process and a commitment to two-way communication with the community about our shared vision for the future.

The city continues a strong tradition as a leader in community involvement - regularly engaging citizens through the sharing of information; through citizen consultation on specific projects; and through the active and ongoing participation of citizens, businesses and community organizations in the development of city policies, strategies and plans for strategic investments.

And that puts Kitchener on the right track in the eyes of its citizens. Citizens tell us that they want to be informed. They want to speak for themselves. They want to be heard. They want an open, transparent, accountable and accessible local government, now - and for the future.

To this end, we must continue to strengthen the connection and understanding among all people in our community, between our community and city government, and between the

city and other orders of government, by enhancing opportunities for public involvement and dialogue.

Strategic Directions:

To ensure that Kitchener sustains a high level of leadership and community engagement – Compass Kitchener recommends that the following strategic directions be undertaken:

1. That the city partners with citizens, business, agencies, organizations, school boards and all orders of government, as appropriate, in all Healthy Community initiatives.
2. That the city develops a Community Engagement Policy that outlines its commitment to, and passion for, two-way communication with citizens, and open, transparent and inclusive municipal government.
3. That the city develops a strategy and processes to support the Community Engagement Policy, that includes the sharing of all pertinent information and ensures opportunities for involvement of all citizens.
4. That council designates the financial resources to plan for, implement and sustain a comprehensive Community

Engagement Policy.

5. That the city develops a partnership with area school boards and other youth-service organizations in an effort to engage tomorrow's leaders in civic life - today.
6. That city staff evaluates efforts to engage the community annually and reports on results as a way of benchmarking community health and well-being related to citizen involvement.
7. That the city reviews its advisory committees to ensure that committee structures and mandates are clear; that there is member representation from across sectors; and that future direction is tied to broad healthy community priorities.
 - That the number of meetings for advisory committees increases to incorporate opportunities for Compass Kitchener and committees to come together to review community priorities, share information and insight, report progress, and identify areas where they can work together.
8. That the City of Kitchener develops a full Volunteer Support Strategy in

2006-2007 to ensure volunteer resources that meet community needs.

- That the city reviews staff resource requirements against volunteer support needs - now and in the future - as part of its “volunteer strategy development.”

9. That the city's Community Investment Strategy, which provides individuals and groups with funding for programs, projects, events and initiatives, includes such things as: broadened support for non-governmental organizations, grant criteria that reflects community

priorities; and, evaluation of the use of city grant money.

- That the city seeks opportunities to collaborate with funding partners to address any gaps in grant funding for individuals and groups in the community.

Key corporate strategies which support the Leadership and Engagement theme can be found under Appendix 1.2.



“Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead