OUR COMMUNITY VISION
Together, we will build an innovative, caring and vibrant Kitchener.

OUR CORPORATE MISSION
Proudly providing valued services for our community.
INNOVATIVE

Kitchener builds on the pioneering, inventive spirit that defines our history by celebrating our powerful urban identity. In Kitchener, sparks of genius become growing business ventures, thriving careers and economic success stories. Part of a globally-competitive, regional innovation economy and a magnet for talent, Kitchener is a city that embraces creativity, collaboration and technology to build a better city with thriving services for citizens.

CARING

Kitchener is a city for everyone. A city where newcomers are welcome and neighbours are connected by more than property lines. Kitchener fosters a sense of belonging and community pride by celebrating the diversity of our community. Our citizens are active and engaged in building strong neighbourhoods with safe streets, and have a meaningful role in the decisions that impact their quality of life. With an exceptional customer-service focus, Kitchener is ‘open’ for citizens to connect with 24-7.

ViBRANT

Kitchener inspires and cultivates a vibrant social, economic and cultural city by working together with citizens to create memorable public places and spaces that encourage new business and economic growth, and promote health, happiness and community spirit. Kitchener’s enviable network of walking and cycling trails, parks and recreation facilities, and community gathering spaces promote connectivity with the community, and with each other. An active city, local sports, arts, music, films and festivals thrive in the heart of the city, and in our world-class sports and entertainment venues.
Great cities don’t just happen. They are built with purpose, with passion, and with a deliberate focus on smart and strategic investments designed to enhance the quality of life for residents today, and in the years to come.

As your elected leaders, you have placed your trust in us to lead Kitchener forward in delivering on the priorities that matter to you. We have listened to your feedback and endorsed a four year strategic plan that creates an actionable plan from these priorities. From accountability to economic prosperity, the city’s strategic plan encompasses five key themes that will help us determine where to invest our time, energy and resources in a way that will have the greatest impact on the quality of life for those who live, work and play in our city. Together, we are clearly focused on the future of Kitchener. As the strategic plan moves forward, you can expect city council and our staff team to work collaboratively with the community to achieve the goals within our strategic plan. You can expect to thrive in a community that values improved engagement and is committed to developing our innovation district as we continue to reimagine and reinvent our economy. You can expect to see our public places and neighbourhoods grow and flourish, within an urban environment which sees our urban forest improved to further inspire a connection to the green spaces we all value. And you can expect that we will leverage our strength as a technologically sophisticated city to further enhance your experience with city services, resources, and staff.

It’s an exciting time to live, work and play in Kitchener! The vision behind this strategic plan will ensure that the innovative, caring and vibrant city we are proud to represent continues to thrive — providing the best quality of life and the best environment for prosperity for all.
WARD 1 Councillor
Scott Davey

WARD 2 Councillor
Dave Schnider

WARD 3 Councillor
John Gazzola

WARD 4 Councillor
Yvonne Fernandes

WARD 5 Councillor
Kelly Galloway-Sealock

WARD 6 Councillor
Paul Singh

WARD 7 Councillor
Bil Ioannidis

WARD 8 Councillor
Zyg Janecki

WARD 9 Councillor
Frank Etherington

WARD 10 Councillor
Sarah Marsh

MAYOR
Berry Vrbanovic

KITCHENER’S STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018
Kitchener is a city that actively seeks to work with others — from community based not for profits like the Community Foundation to large corporations and from neighbourhood associations to individual citizens — we believe that the diverse voices, opinions, experiences and perspectives of our partners is critical to the implementation of the strategies that will drive our vision for the future. More importantly, we believe that collaboration with these partners is the key to success for a vibrant city.
Developing a strategic plan that can effectively meet the needs of a city of more than 230,000 people takes time and focus. A successful plan must ensure that the priorities and strategies accurately reflect what matters most to citizens.

Kitchener’s 2015-2018 Strategic Plan was developed following extensive community consultation. Compass Kitchener (a citizen advisory committee to Council) led a process to gather objective citizen perspective. More than 1,000 citizens were surveyed by phone, providing a current pulse on the community and important insight for development of the strategic plan.

Using the results of the survey, a series of engagement events titled Your Kitchener, Your Say! were hosted to open up a conversation on strategic themes and better understand what might be expected of the city in the future. Nearly 2,000 people participated in this campaign through small group discussions, workbook submissions, online surveys and social media comments. Together with the external research, these sessions provided more than 10,000 pieces of data that members of Compass Kitchener compiled and reviewed to develop a cohesive group of themes and key messages for council to consider.

Next, staff conducted research on municipal and industry trends, exploring direction coming from the province, the region, and neighbouring municipalities. Strategy sessions with council and organizational stakeholders were held, and a draft copy of the recommended strategic plan was reviewed by more than 50 community stakeholder groups.

This extensive public consultation process has resulted in an innovative and practical strategic plan that clearly articulates the priorities and strategies that will have a positive impact on the quality of life for those who live, work and play in Kitchener today, and in years to come.
1 OPEN GOVERNMENT

We will be transparent and accountable to citizens, providing easy access to information, a great customer service experience, and meaningful opportunities to participate in the democratic process. To achieve this, we will:

1.1 Provide public access to all city records, information and data unless there are privacy, security or legal reasons not to do so, developing partnerships to promote the use of data for economic, social and environmental community benefits.

1.2 Strengthen communication on issues of interest to the public and proactively publish related documents in an accessible format to give citizens the information they need to understand the city's plans, priorities and the rationale for key decisions.

1.3 Create more opportunities for citizen dialogue on community issues and introduce new ways for people to get involved in decisions that affect them.

1.4 Introduce more convenient and effective channels for citizens to access city information and services.

1.5 Strengthen a culture within the organization that puts the citizen first and improves the quality of the customer service experience.
ACTIONS that the City of Kitchener will take to make progress include, but are not limited to:

- routine disclosure of city records and the release of more city data sets to the public;
- a comprehensive review of the city’s community engagement policies and practices;
- implement the e-participation strategy;
- implement more effective ways to communicate with citizens about where tax dollars are spent and how revenues are used to serve the community; and,
- implement corporate-wide customer service training.
We will work within a collaborative network of city-builders to create a dynamic and prosperous Kitchener that is rich with employment opportunities and successful business ventures that can grow and thrive within the broader global economy. To achieve this, we will:

2.1 Foster a business environment that stimulates innovation and job creation, helping startup entrepreneurs establish and grow their business.

2.2 Support the attraction, retention and development of existing and new industries within the regional economy, working in collaboration with the economic development corporation for Waterloo Region.

2.3 Strengthen Kitchener’s connections within the GTA-Waterloo Region corridor to support the development of a globally-significant regional innovation economy.

2.4 Develop and nurture a high quality of life and a powerful identity for the City of Kitchener to attract investment and a talented creative workforce.

2.5 Facilitate the ongoing development of Downtown Kitchener as the heart of the city.
ACTIONS that the City of Kitchener will take to make progress include, but are not limited to:

• strengthen the promotion of the innovation district nationally and globally;
• work towards establishing an advanced manufacturing incubator in Kitchener;
• invest in the cultural sector as a key driver of a creative city and the local creative economy;
• facilitate the development of the digital media, film and music industry; and,
• develop a distinct and effective communications strategy that supports the city’s evolving identity.
We will work with community partners to create complete, connected, safe and walkable neighbourhoods with a range of housing options. We will encourage people to come together, interact with one another and build relationships through inclusive programs, services, events and great public gathering places. To achieve this, we will:

3.1 Give citizens the tools and opportunities to play an active leadership role in creating great neighbourhoods and fostering a stronger sense of community belonging.

3.2 Create safer streets in our neighbourhoods through new approaches to traffic calming.

3.3 Manage growth, curb urban sprawl, and foster more mixed-use development, ensuring new development is integrated with the diversity and character of the surrounding community.

3.4 Facilitate and promote housing developments that provide options for a diversity of lifestyles and household types.

3.5 Continue to encourage active participation in existing recreational facilities while moving forward with the provision of new recreational opportunities in underserved areas of the city.

3.6 Provide opportunities and support for citizens to lead the way in creating active and vibrant public places that promote people’s health, happiness and well-being by capitalizing on local community assets such as community centres, pools, arenas, libraries, parks, trails and other public spaces.
ACTIONS that the City of Kitchener will take to make progress include, but are not limited to:

- implement a framework to guide and support citizens in creating neighbourhood action plans;
- expand the community gardens program;
- expand the city’s public art program with a specific focus on neighbourhoods;
- update the Kitchener Growth Management Strategy;
- develop a complete streets policy;
- explore options to accelerate the development of the South Kitchener District Park; and,
- proceed with expansions to the Doon Pioneer Park and Mill Courtland Community Centres.
4 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We will have well planned, managed and cost effective infrastructure systems that support long-term community needs for services, harnessing the benefits of nature through green infrastructure programs to create a healthy urban environment. To achieve this, we will:

4.1 Manage and enhance the urban forest so that it will continue to make a long-term contribution to the livability of Kitchener.

4.2 Develop measures to manage stormwater and improve water quality in the city’s watersheds.

4.3 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption in all areas of city operations.

4.4 Develop a network of safe, comfortable and linked pedestrian and cycling facilities and improve year-round maintenance on priority routes.

4.5 Strengthen the capability and capacity within the organization to manage all of the city’s assets so that they are affordable, dependable and sustainable in the long-term.

4.6 Improve the City of Kitchener’s ability to leverage funding opportunities for the development and renewal of infrastructure through federal or provincial programs and other partnerships.
ACTIONS that the City of Kitchener will take to make progress include, but are not limited to:

- move forward with the LED streetlight conversion;
- create a pro-active forestry management program;
- develop a prioritized program for the year-round maintenance of trails and walkways;
- complete a Stormwater Master Plan;
- work towards developing asset management plans for all asset categories enabled by organizational structure and business processes; and,
- explore options to accelerate capital funding for the renewal of roads, water and sewer infrastructure.
We will deliver quality public services that meet the day-to-day needs of the community in a reliable and affordable way, made possible through technology, innovation, employee engagement and a sound long-term financial plan. To achieve this, we will:

5.1 Enhance and roll out plans for managing emergencies and business disruptions to protect lives and continue to deliver critical services to the community.

5.2 Improve the design and delivery of city services so that they provide what citizens want in the most reliable, convenient and cost-efficient way.

5.3 Provide citizens with competitive, rational and affordable taxation levels.

5.4 Ensure the responsible stewardship of public funds within a supportive policy framework.

5.5 Strengthen employee engagement, performance management and accountability for results across the organization.
ACTIONS that the City of Kitchener will take to make progress include, but are not limited to:

- implement the recommendations of the Business Continuity Plan;
- implement the Talent Management Strategy;
- develop a long-term financial plan to consolidate existing financial policies/strategies and provide for the city’s financial sustainability;
- develop and implement the Corporate Technology Strategic Plan/Digital Kitchener Strategy; and,
- revitalize the joint services initiative and look at the potential to expand the scope of opportunities.
MESSAGE FROM THE CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM

This strategic plan creates a bold and compelling plan for the City of Kitchener that will help ensure the success of the city for all citizens while strengthening the organization to meet the challenges of the future. The strategic plan and the supporting corporate business plan represent our promise to the community for this term of council to make Kitchener a more innovative, caring and vibrant community.

Citizen input has greatly influenced the direction of this plan, and hundreds of ideas were generated by the community through the planning process. With limited resources, and a commitment to keep tax rates affordable, staff and council have worked together to choose ideas that will have the greatest impact on the overall quality of life in the community for the next four years, making Kitchener a place to earn a good living, live a good life and love where you live.

This is an ambitious plan, but it is achievable. It will inspire innovation, a dedication to improvement and a drive to serve the community better. It will help to keep the energy and commitment of our people focused on what matters most so that citizens see meaningful results that balance both short-term needs and long-term opportunities.

City staff are committed to working collaboratively to run our operations in the most effective and efficient manner possible, and in having the best possible community impact through our efforts. Through regular reporting, we will share our progress on the strategic plan, clearly outlining to citizens how we are measuring up to the commitments we have made in this plan.