



City of Kitchener **Housing Strategy**



Draft

August 2020

Land and Call to Action Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Kitchener is situated on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee Peoples. We recognize our responsibility to serve as stewards for the land and honour the original caretakers who came before us.

We would also like to acknowledge that our community is enriched by the enduring knowledge and deep-rooted traditions of the diverse First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Kitchener today.

We acknowledge that the City's initial response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a starting point in the City's journey to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with the local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. We recognize and acknowledge, however, that a more comprehensive approach to reconciliation is required to address systemic inequities, racism and to better support, celebrate and deliver services to Indigenous Peoples in Kitchener.

In order to uphold commitments made to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a region-wide Reconciliation Action Plan is being launched by area municipalities, the Region and the Grand River Conservation Authority. This work will involve comprehensive engagement with local Indigenous communities, including Elders, knowledge keepers and youth, to better understand the range of interests, community needs, opportunities, and associated challenges experienced locally.

Housing is one of our most fundamental needs. Its impact goes well beyond a basic requirement for shelter. Our homes shape nearly every aspect of our lives:

- Health and wellbeing,
- Educational achievement,
- Success in the workplace,
- Security of our retirement, and
- Dignity in old age

Housing's impact extends to the broader community, too. The availability of housing choices that meet people's needs mean safer, more sustainable and more vibrant communities. It enables public services to be more efficient and effective, and businesses to be more diverse and prosperous. It helps heal social divisions and make cities stronger. ¹



¹ Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia (2013)

Acknowledgements

The preparation of the draft Housing Strategy is informed by the voices of those with lived experience, generously shared through in-person, virtual and survey connections.

The direction to prepare a housing strategy for Kitchener came from the community, Council and staff. With the leadership of Kitchener City Council, the Housing Strategy will help implement the City’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan contributing to an innovative, caring and vibrant community.

We would like to thank the City of Kitchener Affordable Housing Strategy Advisory Committee for their insights, review and input to this document, along with the review and strategy support of Justin Readman and Kathryn Dever. The Affordable Housing Strategy Advisory Committee is Co-Chaired by Karen Coviello and Justin Readman and its members are:

| Council | Public | Non-Profit | Industry |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Debbie Chapman | Kathy Hamilton | Lori Trumper | Alex Sumner |
| Christine Michaud | Linda Terry | Elizabeth Clarke | Mike Maxwell |
| Dave Schnider | Martin Asling | Karen Coviello | George Bikas |
| Paul Singh | Margaret Ellis-Young | Dan Driedger | Stephen Litt |
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| Rhonda Wideman | Alan Praught | Al Mills | Brian Doucet |
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The City of Kitchener Housing Strategy was prepared under the direction of Justin Readman, General Manager of Development Services by a staff working group consisting of:

- Karen Cooper, Office of the CAO
- Tim Donegani, Planning Division
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- Mike Seiling, Building Division
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- Nancy Steinfield, Technology Innovation and Services

Summary

Kitchener is a dynamic city experiencing strong recent growth and development which is expected to continue in the future. Kitchener contributes to Waterloo being the fastest growing region in Canada. Over a 25-year period, Kitchener is expected to grow by approximately 80,000 people, which is equivalent to about 35,000 new households². The city is changing with taller buildings, increasing urbanization and a trend to smaller household sizes. This growth brings both benefits and challenges.

This is the first time in several decades that Kitchener is examining affordability across the housing continuum - from homelessness to community housing to affordable and market rental and ownership housing as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Housing Continuum



Source: CMHC

When the Housing Needs Assessment was prepared and presented to Council in January 2020, affordability issues were documented throughout the housing continuum. It became clear that a Housing Strategy was needed to address issues along the complete continuum and not just the more usual approach to address the housing needs of people with low incomes.

Coming out of the first pandemic wave, Kitchener retains a strong resale market for housing and applications to permit new residential development continue to be submitted to the city. New ways of responding to homelessness during the pandemic demonstrated that providing better supports and housing resulted in improvements in health and housing outcomes for people who are homeless.

The city is attracting a wide diversity of people eager to live and work in the community. Housing is critical to the City's long-term prosperity, as attracting and retaining residents requires housing options that serve all income levels and household types. As our city becomes more diverse, we must become a more equitable and inclusive community. A city where everyone feels like they belong, are welcome, their needs are met and they can fully share in our city's prosperity.

All levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit sector have roles to play in addressing housing need in a community.

² Region of Waterloo, 2017

The Region of Waterloo has the mandate to address housing issues in the region and performs the following significant roles in relation to affordable housing:

- Provides policy and strategic direction, including target setting for affordable housing;
- Designated by the Province as the Service Manager for housing and homelessness;
- Provides housing and support programs; and
- Is the largest community housing provider in the region.

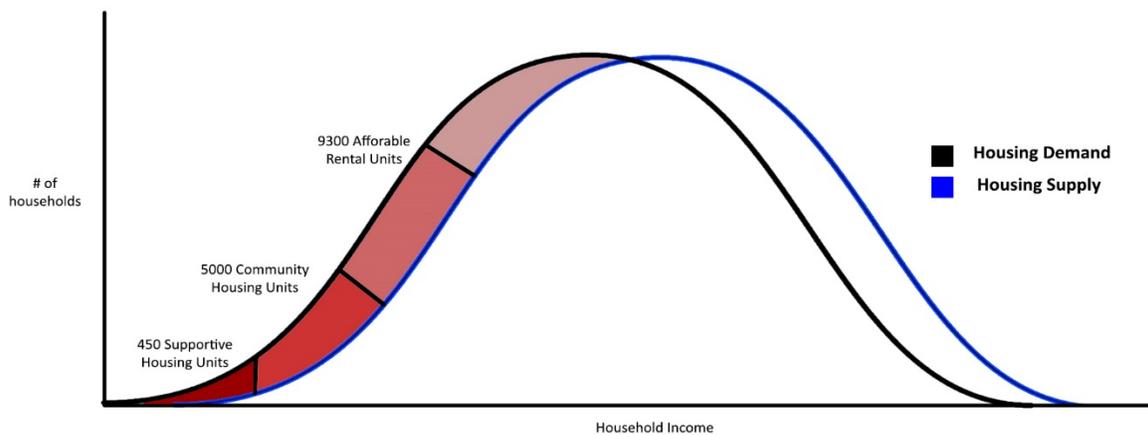
Part of the reason for developing a strategy was to explore what local roles the City of Kitchener could play that are complementary to the responsibilities and work of the Region, the non-profit sector and the private sector to help ensure housing is provided in the city that meets the needs of existing and future residents.

Building on the findings of the 2020 Needs Assessment, the Housing Strategy is intended to help Kitchener maximize the use of senior government programs and private sector incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing for residents.

Housing Need and Supply

The amount, type and cost of housing describe the "supply" side of the housing market. The number of households, their income and housing requirements describe the "demand" side of housing. Ideally, the supply of housing provided by the market through the development industry matches and meets the needs of the people living in a municipality. In reality, there is a gap between what housing people need and what is supplied by the market. For Kitchener, the existing housing supply gaps are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Existing Gaps in Kitchener’s Housing Supply



The current housing delivery and support system is not functioning effectively. Housing needs are not being met and the existing silo approach by levels of government, non-profits, institutions and the private sector is not as effective as needed. Filling the housing gaps cannot be met by market forces and the development industry alone. Significant investment from the federal and provincial governments in funding housing that fills the gaps is needed to meet people's existing needs.

To address this implementation of the Housing Strategy aims to achieve:

- Housing as a Human Right.
- Elimination of Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) opposition to varied housing tenures and types.
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion in Housing.
- Housing as a Safety Net.
- A Reimagined Shelter and Supportive Housing System.

The Housing Strategy is developed on a foundation of the following principles:

- Stable, secure, affordable housing is a human right.
- People focused – must think about the people affected the most.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles help identify and remove barriers and reinforce best practices.
- Explicitly anti-racist/anti-discriminatory.
- Realistic timelines and achievable actions.

The Housing Strategy proposes:

- Creation of a collaborative, co-ordinated Housing Advocacy Plan (to end homelessness).
- New ways of working together.
- Focus on what Kitchener can uniquely do.
- Kitchener advocating for others in what they need to do.
- Making best use of resources.
- Five Strategies - **Meeting Needs, What the City Can Do, Working Together, Being Informed/Informing and Implementation/Work Plan.**

A critical element of Housing Strategy is the recognition that we must all work together, through partnerships and creative solutions, to make the needed substantive and long-lasting changes to help make housing more affordable.

Proposed Strategic Actions Include:

1. Meeting Needs

1.1 Establish the following housing targets:

- **450 units of transitional and supportive housing** for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are needed. This includes approximately 170 housing units for men, 70 housing units for women, 60 housing units for youth, 50 housing units for people with acute concurrent mental health and addiction challenges and 100 units for people with cognitive challenges.
- **5,000 units of community housing** for people with low and modest incomes on the Housing Waiting List wanting to live in Kitchener are needed. **Note: Increase from 3,000 households reported in Dec 2019**
- **9,300 new affordable rental housing units** at monthly rents under \$1,300 for people with household incomes under \$63,000 are needed. Nearly 4,000 of these needed units are for people paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

2. What the City Can Do

Staff and the Advisory Committee have focused their efforts on identifying roles and responses that are unique to the City and where Kitchener has jurisdiction or resources. All agreed that the Region of Waterloo should continue with its mandate, roles and responsibilities regarding homelessness and housing. Effort has been made for the city actions to be complementary and supportive of Region of Waterloo mandate, roles and responsibilities.

Policies

2.1 Report to Council on the feasibility and implications of the following potential policies:

- Inclusionary Housing Policy and implementing Zoning Bylaw (September 2020)
- Lodging House Policy (December 2020)
- Parking Waiver Policy and implementing Zoning Bylaw for affordable housing developments (December 2020)
- Parkland Dedication Waiver Policy for affordable housing developments (2021)
- Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy to mitigate the impacts resulting from redevelopment of purpose-built rental apartments on current tenants, including consideration of developers providing advanced notice and assistance to residents including plans for relocating existing residents (Propose doing this in collaboration with Cities of Cambridge and Waterloo in 2021)
- Request Region to include consideration of funding for growth related (future) affordable housing developments in creation of development charge and community benefit policies (2021)
- Community Improvement Plan for affordable housing (2021)
- Request Region to explore feasibility of a HomeShare living model



Development Approval Process

2.2 Continue improving the development approval process through the Development Services Review with input from the development industry and the community

Incentives, Fees and Waivers

2.3 Report to Council on the feasibility and implications of the following incentives, fees and waivers:

- Continue the Fee Waiver Policy for non-profit organizations and expand its application to affordable housing units provided in private sector development applications.
- Implement a 20-year, interest-free deferral of development charges for eligible affordable housing projects
- Request the Region and School Boards to jointly review with the City a reduction of Development Charges for affordable housing developments
- Report to Council on the feasibility of establishing an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to provide ongoing funding to support Housing Initiatives

City Lands

2.4 Develop a strategy for the use of specific surplus city lands for affordable housing, including:

- Identifying City and Regional site(s) for development of permanent supportive housing for people to move to from Lot 42 A Better Tent City, tenting encampments, shelters and homelessness (immediate)
- A “priority” Pilot Project involving supportive and community rental housing in proximity to transit /major transit center (initiate in 2020)
- Identifying city lands suitable for others to develop for affordable housing and seek to incorporate units that house people leaving homelessness, supportive housing, community housing, below market rental and below market ownership (2021)
- Assessing feasibility of including affordable housing in the development of new or redeveloped City facilities, eg. community centers, fire stations (2022)

- Kitchener playing a leadership role in advancing innovative mixed housing communities utilizing strategic parcels of city land, as a model for other Canadian communities to replicate. (2022)

3. Working Together

Advocacy

3.1 Request the Region of Waterloo develop, in collaboration with local municipalities, non-profit housing, support, and philanthropic organizations and the private sector, a capital and operating funding strategy to end homelessness through a reimagined shelter, supportive and community housing plan. This strategy should integrate affordable housing, economic development and transit strategies as they all correlate to affordability and wellbeing outcomes.

3.2 Jointly advocate for Provincial and Federal funding for housing acquisition, renovation and development of affordable housing and related supports along the housing continuum as part of community building, sustainability and economic recovery, including funding and supports for:

- **House of Friendship** seeking 2 sites and funding for the ShelterCare integrated health and transitional housing concept (80 units) and for supportive housing project (60 units)
- **YWCA-KW** seeking a site and funding for approximately 30 one-bedroom units of affordable supportive housing for women leaving homelessness
- **The Working Centre** to acquire and renovate a second site to house and support people who are homeless and to add 40 units of housing to add to their affordable housing portfolio
- **Kitchener Housing Inc (KHI)** seeking a site and work in partnership with a developer to create new community housing and to purchase buildings to preserve affordable housing
- **One Roof's** proposal to develop approximately 58 units of supportive modular housing on their site for youth who are homeless
- **Waterloo Region Habitat for Humanity** seeking sites for affordable home ownership
- **Indwell** seeking 2-3 more sites in Kitchener for approximately 120 to 180 supportive housing units
- **Menno Homes** seeking funding to complete its project under development
- **Habilitation** seeking funding for a supportive housing project
- **Reception House Waterloo Region** seeking a site and funding for the development of a Refugee Services Hub.
- **John Howard Society Waterloo-Wellington** seeking funding and resources for a full-time staff member to help develop a housing strategy/model
- **Church and Religious Institutions** within the City have expressed interest in redeveloping their surplus lands to accommodate affordable housing. However, they often lack the capital funds and development experience to do so.

- **Private Sector Affordable Housing developers** have expressed interest in developing more affordable housing units, but face barriers around acquiring sites and capital funds.

3.3 Request the Region of Waterloo to revise its Housing and Homelessness Plan to incorporate local municipal input and needs and develop future plans in collaboration with local municipalities, non-profit housing, support and philanthropic organizations and the private sector.

3.4 Request (through AMO) the Government of Ontario to develop and adopt a provincial housing strategy including measurable targets and provision of sufficient funds to accelerate progress on ending homelessness and ensuring access of all Ontarians, including those of limited income, to housing of an adequate standard without discrimination. It should also take into consideration the needs of Indigenous people, people with disabilities including mental illness, women experiencing domestic violence, lone parents, immigrants and newcomers and other people living in poverty or with low incomes.

Partnerships

3.5 Develop jointly a Region/City Charter to ensure more collaboration and opportunities to identify and address housing challenges in Kitchener.

3.6 Continue working with the private sector and facilitate partnerships with non-profit partners to provide more affordable housing

4. Being Informed/Informing

Housing data specific to the City of Kitchener has been challenging to collect. Renovictions remove affordable housing and generally result in much higher rents being charged post renovation or redevelopment. Commodification of housing, where housing is held on speculation, for investment, or used to generate income instead of as a place to live is increasing through Airbnbs, rental condos, or other untracked rental housing types.

4.1 Provide regular updates to the Council, the public and staff on housing needs assessments

4.2 Undertake additional work to assess housing needs for:

- People who are homeless
- Indigenous Peoples
- Seniors
- Immigrants
- Students
- Future population
- LGBTQ+
- Women

4.3 Track and monitor renovictions, where tenants are displaced from their homes to allow major renovations or redevelopment to proceed and housing held for investment in Kitchener.

4.4 Use the City's Social Media Platform to engage and inform the public on addressing housing issues in the city.

4.5 Establish a Lived-Experience advisory group to advise staff on addressing housing issues in the city and to monitor strategy implementation and measure success.

5. Implementation/Workplan

5.1 Develop a prioritized annual work plan to implement the Housing Strategy including timing and responsibilities, to be used to inform annual budgets

5.2 Recommend an annual operating amount to support housing initiatives (To be quantified)

5.3 Provide staffing to support implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy (To be quantified)

5.4 Provide regular public reports on success and challenges in implementing the Housing Strategy



“Governments must recognize the needs of affordable housing. People have different needs, regarding housing. Whether you are on OW, Ontario disability, Mental health, senior working and make a low Income. There is a need for affordable housing. Affordable housing that is in **good repair, safe, that you can call home** [...] If I lost my affordable housing I would end up in a shelter or the street.”

- Engage Kitchener Survey Respondant

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1. Where We Started

Strategic Plan

Kitchener's strategic vision is that "Together we will build an innovative, caring and vibrant community"

In 2018 the Environics Survey of Kitchener residents seeking input on community priorities to help prepare the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan reported a sizable increase in the interest of residents in seeing mental health and addictions, homelessness and affordable housing issues addressed in the city.

[Link to Staff Report](#)

Substantiated through additional community engagement, the Caring Community goal to "Enhance people's sense of belonging and connection by providing welcoming community spaces and programs, better engaging, serving and supporting our diverse populations and helping to make housing affordable" was approved by Council in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

Council also approved the strategic plan action to "Create an Affordable Housing Strategy for Kitchener by 2020 in collaboration with the Region of Waterloo, community groups and the development industry."

[Link to Strategic Plan](#)

The Vibrant Economy Goal of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is to build a vibrant city by making strategic investments to support job creation, economic prosperity, thriving arts and culture, and great places to live.

One of the actions under this goal is to complete a comprehensive city-owned property review by 2020 to determine how properties could be effectively used to advance city strategic objectives. Properties are being reviewed by staff. Council will consider land disposition and acquisition in camera and decision information will be publicly available.

Public response to the Strategic Plan proposal to create an Affordable Housing Strategy

"We need this. Seeing the mentally low individuals on our streets in a bad time in their life reflects on us all. Everyone deserves a roof to sleep under and food to eat. Please make it happen."

"Affordable housing, mental health and supporting recovery from addictions need to be a priority for our entire society."

"I am very excited for a focused city strategy on affordable housing. At the same time, it is essential that people feel like they belong. I am very pleased to see a focus on diversity and inclusion in a variety of ways."

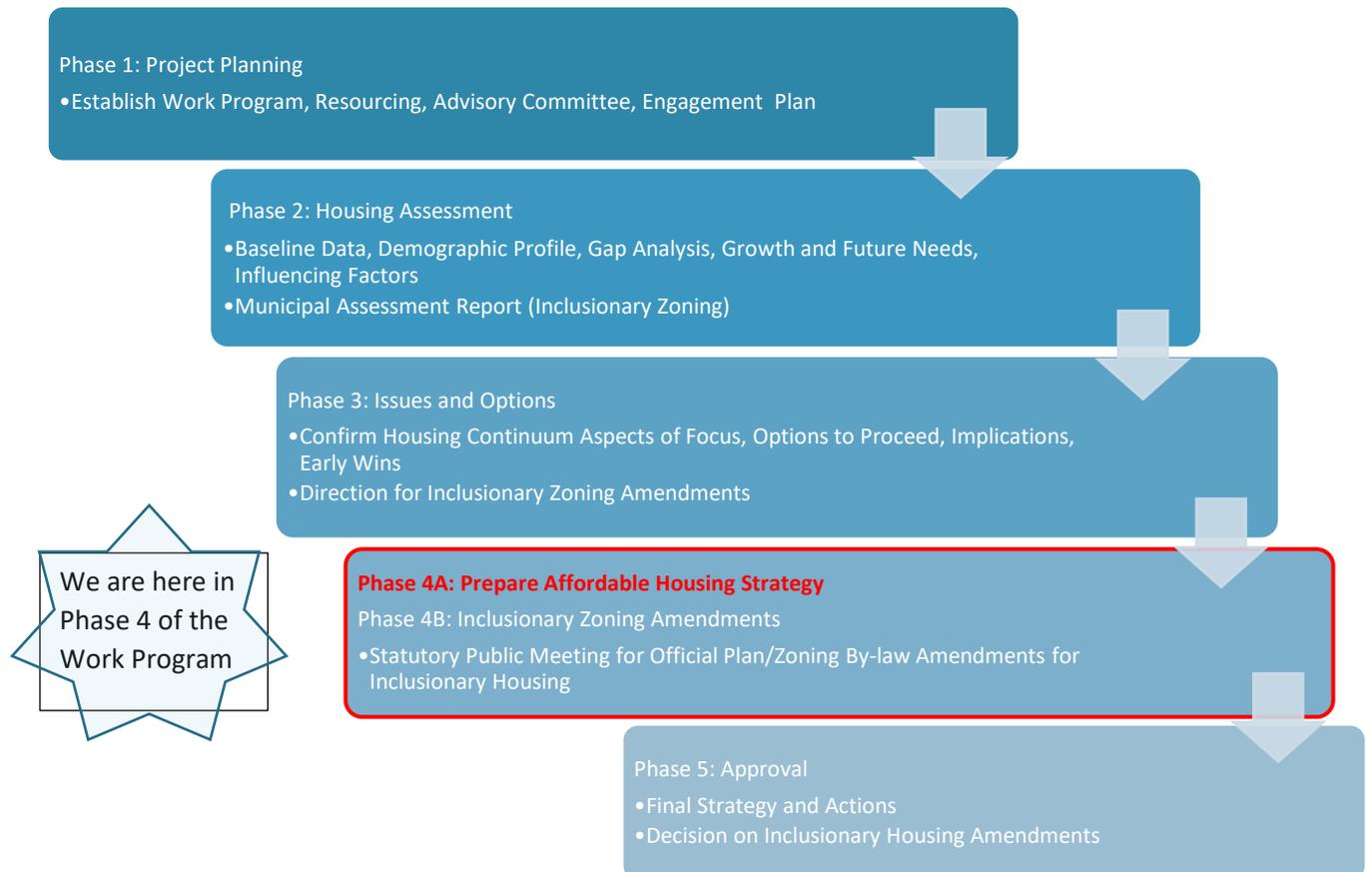
"These to me (Caring Community) are some of the most important goals that we need to focus on. Many communities address things such as economic vibrancy and environmental stewardship, but Kitchener stands out to me as a community that strives to take care of all of its citizens. It still has a lot of work to do but I often see Kitchener as taking a lead on a number of the goals outlined here and I strongly hope that continues and strengthens."

"City needs to be determined to set clear goals in affordable housing as a priority, as so far, with the weak enforcement, we are losing low-rent housing and not rebuilding it. Inclusionary zoning to be determined asap. No bonusing for things that developers should do anyway: green space, arts and such. Incentives only for minimum 10% affordable housing. "

Work Plan

The following 5-phase work plan guides the development of the Housing Strategy.

[Link to Staff Report](#)



Council appointed Councillors Chapman, Michaud, Schnider and Singh to an Advisory Committee of diverse representatives of people with lived experience, affordable housing and service providers, developers, the Region of Waterloo, the LHN, academia and the community to provide their advice to staff on developing the housing strategy.

The Advisory Committee began meeting in November 2019. Four Subcommittees were established and progress reports from three of the sub-committees are contained in Appendix 1. Work on the Lodging House Sub-committee will commence in Fall 2020.

Needs Assessment

Staff completed a comprehensive needs assessment, with input from the Advisory Committee, in January 2020 to inform Council, the public and stakeholders on the state of housing in the city.

[Link to Needs Assessment](#)

Key Findings include:

The current housing delivery and support system is not functioning effectively.

Housing in recent years has become more unaffordable for an increasingly larger share of Kitchener's population.

Poverty and Core Housing Need is increasing in the City of Kitchener.

Housing prices continue to increase as shown in the following table.

Figure 2: Average Re-Sale Price of Houses & Income Needed to Own December 2019 & July 2020

| | Average House Price Dec 2019/July 2020 | % Increase Dec-Jul | Household Income Required Dec 2019/July 2020 |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Single Detached | \$582,080/\$745,149 | +28% | \$164,275/** |
| Semi Detached | \$435,133/\$522,872 | +20% | \$122,803/ |
| Townhouse | \$401,708/\$465,756 | +16% | \$113,370/ |
| Condo Apartment | \$304,939/\$392,770 | +29% | \$86,060/ |
| Average | \$499,323/\$639,814 | | \$140,919/ |

Source: Kitchener-Waterloo Association of Realtors 2019 and 2020, *House Priced based on Average MLS Sale Price*

(*Rolling 12 months average price as of December 2019 and July 2020)

This has placed pressure on the rental market as people who would have purchased homes are staying in rental accommodation, because incomes have not increased in pace with increases in housing costs. Redevelopment has eliminated some of the affordable rental housing and replaced it with more condos and more expensive rental housing.

In August 2019 Kitchener's rent increases were reported to be the greatest in Canada, up nearly 16% over the previous year. At \$1,310 per month for a one-bedroom apartment Kitchener was the seventh most expensive in the 24 largest municipalities across Canada. In August 2020 Kitchener moved to tenth place of most expensive one-bedroom rents with a median rent of \$1,370.³

³ Padmapper 2019 and 2020

Housing Need and Supply

In Canada, generally those who can afford to buy housing do so - in part to provide security of tenure and in part as an investment. Across the country, 67.8% of Canadians own and 30.2% rent their housing, with the trend being a decline in ownership and an increase in renting.⁴ The amount, type and cost of housing describe the "supply" side of the housing market. The number of households, income and housing requirements describe the "demand" side of housing. Ideally, the supply of housing provided by the market through the development industry matches and meets the needs of the people living in a municipality, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 3: Ideal Housing Demand and Housing Supply Graph



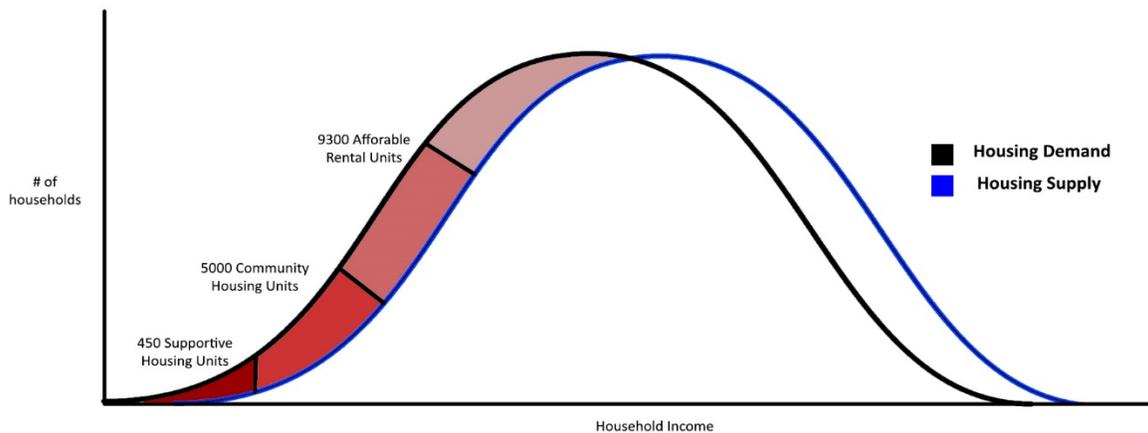
In reality, there is a gap between what housing people need and what is supplied by the market. For Kitchener, the existing housing supply gaps are illustrated in Figure 4 and include:

- **450 units of transitional and supportive housing** for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are needed. This includes approximately 170 housing units for men, 70 housing units for women, 60 housing units for youth, 50 housing units for people with acute concurrent mental health and addiction challenges and 100 units for people with cognitive challenges.
- **5,000 units of community housing** for people with low and modest incomes on the Housing Waiting List wanting to live in Kitchener are needed. **Note: Increase from 3,000 households reported in Dec 2019**

⁴ Stats Canada 2016 Census <https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi16-11.html>

- **9,300 new affordable rental housing units** at monthly rents under \$1,300 for people with household incomes under \$63,000 are needed. Nearly 4,000 of these needed units are for people paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

Figure 4: Existing Gaps in Kitchener’s Housing Supply



The current housing delivery and support system is not functioning effectively. Housing needs are not being met and the existing silo approach by levels of government, non-profits, institutions and the private sector is not as effective as needed. Filling the Housing Gaps cannot be met by market forces and the development industry alone. Significant investment from the federal and provincial governments in funding housing that fills the gaps is needed to meet people’s existing needs.

Attaining affordable housing is especially challenging for:

- People who are homeless – especially for people with mental health and addiction challenges
- Students and youth
- Recent immigrants
- Indigenous people
- Single parents
- People earning the minimum wage
- People with disabilities with low to moderate incomes
- Seniors, especially those in rental housing or requiring care. (The population aged 65 years and older increased by 35% from 2006 to 2016 and is expected to almost double (increase by 94%) by 2041.)

Housing data specific to the City of Kitchener has been challenging to collect. Additional work is needed to assess housing for:

- People who are Homeless
- Indigenous Peoples
- Seniors
- Immigrants
- Students
- Future population
- LGBTQ+
- Women

Renovictions, where tenants are displaced from their homes to allow major renovations or redevelopment to proceed, are not tracked or monitored for Kitchener. Housing held for investment is not tracked or monitored for Kitchener.

Kitchener has an experienced non-profit housing sector.

The private sector is interested in developing affordable housing and improving the development review process and planning context to allow more housing to be built.

More collaboration is needed between the City and the Region to identify and address housing challenges in Kitchener.

Development Services Review

There is a correlation between the review/approval timeline for development applications and the affordability of housing units. The Development Services Review is underway in parallel with the development of the Housing Strategy. The goal of the Development Services Review is to bring a greater focus, coordination and accountability to the City's development functions and, in doing so, reduce overall process lead times by 30% through a series of cumulative, incremental process improvements.

City staff have been working with both internal and external stakeholders over the past year to undertake an end-to-end process review of the full site plan approval process, which has included the design and implementation of several improvements positively impacting the development community including:

- The digital submission and review process has been advanced during the pandemic. Paper files have been eliminated, circulations are completed electronically, there is a new digital stamping/approval process, and training is underway with staff across all commenting divisions on a new and standardized approach to completing digital reviews using Bluebeam. This will save developers time and money and result in consistent feedback from the City. Commenting parties will see/review the comments of their colleagues to ensure that comments do not conflict.
- Pre-submission meetings are more meaningful: staff comments are provided to the applicant in advance of the meeting; there is a new ability to request staff attendance at

meeting; the discussion focused on red-flag issues only; there is clarity related to requirements for submitting a full application.

- Reviewers are assigned across the life cycle of a file beginning at the pre-submission stage, providing for greater consistency and continuity.
- Staff resourcing has been adjusted to help ensure ‘complete application’ reviews. Backlogs have been eliminated with 10 file planners reviewing for completeness versus 1 previously. Complete applications are assigned to the same planner who reviewed the pre-consultation submission.
- The most common reasons that submissions are incomplete have been identified and 11 improvements are being implemented to help facilitate complete submissions, thereby eliminating time lost in multiple resubmissions.
- The City now grants partial sign-off for onsite works certifications. Now, once something has passed an inspection, it is never added back to the deficiency list. This will save developers a significant amount of time and money through this streamlined process.
- A new proactive process has been established to notify developers when the City is holding securities. This should result in more timely inspections and return of securities.
- Website updates are currently underway to outline the steps in the full site plan process, provide estimated timelines, and consolidate all multi-disciplinary requirements in one location.

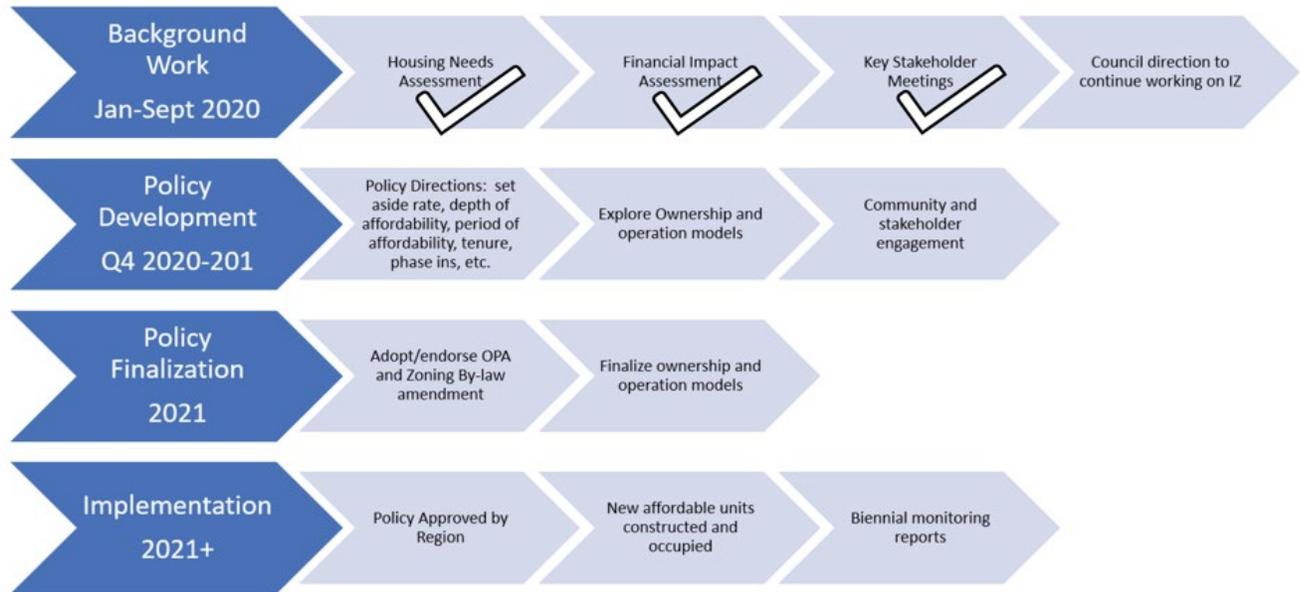
The City is using the philosophy of continuous improvements and is employing the Lean methodology to develop and implement process improvements. In fall 2020, staff will be working on the development of industry explainers/scorecards that explain how to get a passing score at various stages of the development process and will be reviewing file management practices and accountabilities.

As improvements are implemented, measures of success are identified, and data is collected. As the site plan process is a multi-year process, staff anticipate data will be available later in 2020. More information on the Development Services Review can be found [here](#).

Inclusionary Zoning

Kitchener has been reviewing the feasibility of using inclusionary zoning in collaboration with the cities of Waterloo and Cambridge and the Region of Waterloo. The work on inclusionary zoning is underway in tandem with preparing the Affordable Housing Strategy. Steps in the Inclusionary Zoning Review include:

Figure 5: Inclusionary Zoning Workplan

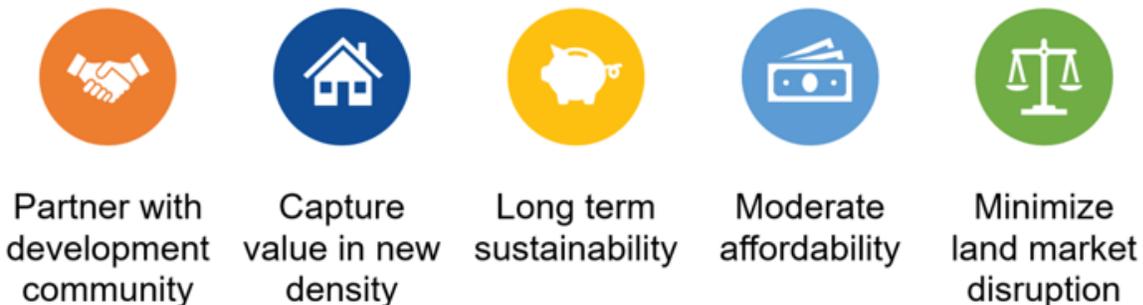


The tool is typically used to create affordable housing for low-and moderate-income households. In Ontario, this means families and individuals in the lower 60% of the income distribution for the regional market area, as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. Generally, inclusionary zoning tends to work best in locations experiencing rapid population growth and high demand for housing, accompanied by strong economies and housing markets.

The key components of inclusionary zoning programs include:

- an assessment report on housing in the community
- financial viability for developers
- located in major transit station areas
- official plan policies in support of inclusionary zoning
- a by-law or by-laws passed under section 34 of the *Planning Act* implementing inclusionary zoning official plan policies

Key Principles of successful inclusionary policies include:



Staff will be reporting to Council in Fall 2020 with the findings from the review of the feasibility to implement inclusionary policies and zoning and seeking direction to undertake public consultation.

Council Discussion on Issues and Options

Council participated in a strategic session in February 2020 to review housing issues and options identified by staff and the Advisory Committee ([Link to staff report](#)). The overall feedback from Council was that addressing homelessness should be a top priority in developing the Housing Strategy for Kitchener. Council reiterated that addressing homelessness is not within the mandate of our local government and it is the Region of Waterloo's mandate. Council asked: "How do we deal with this?"

Council addressed entering the discussion on resolving homelessness as a partner and not taking on sole responsibility. Council noted transformational change is needed. Instead of relying on shelters, housing should be provided with needed services for people. Spending on homelessness has been reactive, to date. If it was done proactively it would help solve some of the homelessness issues. The City can be an effective advocate working with the Region.

Other housing issues commented on by Council include:

- Clarity on Defining "Affordable"
- Community Rental Housing
- Affordable Rental Housing
- Affordable Home Ownership
- Controls to ensure units remain affordable
- Recognize Affordable Housing as an Economic Driver
- Development Services processes to achieve greater efficiencies
- Filling Gaps in Housing Supply
- Ways To Increase Housing Supply
- Consider Inclusionary Housing
- Focus on Housing and Transit Strategy Relationship

Engage Kitchener Survey on the Issues and Options around Housing

Based on responses from the Council Strategy Session and Advisory Committee workshops, city staff created the Engage Kitchener survey in order to receive community engagement on what the public believed were the issues and options surrounding housing in Kitchener, and to describe what they believe are the roles and responsibilities of the various sectors that influence housing.

With the help of advisory committee members and other community partners in the non-profit sector, the survey was able to be delivered to various shelters, supportive housing units and other service centres in an accessible format to get input from those with lived experience. As well, committee members dispersed the survey through their various networks which helped the survey receive insightful responses even throughout the pandemic.

Engage Kitchener - Survey Results

The Engage Kitchener Survey asked the public to provide their input on the issues and options regarding housing in Kitchener. The Engage Kitchener survey was conducted from March 13th, 2020 to May 8th 2020 and received 177 unique responses.

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of responses by postal code forward sortation area, which closely aligns with the City’s Ward boundaries. Ward 9 had the highest proportion of respondents followed by Wards 10 and 8. Figure 7 illustrates distribution of residents in core housing need by census tract, and when compared to the distribution of survey responses the two somewhat align.

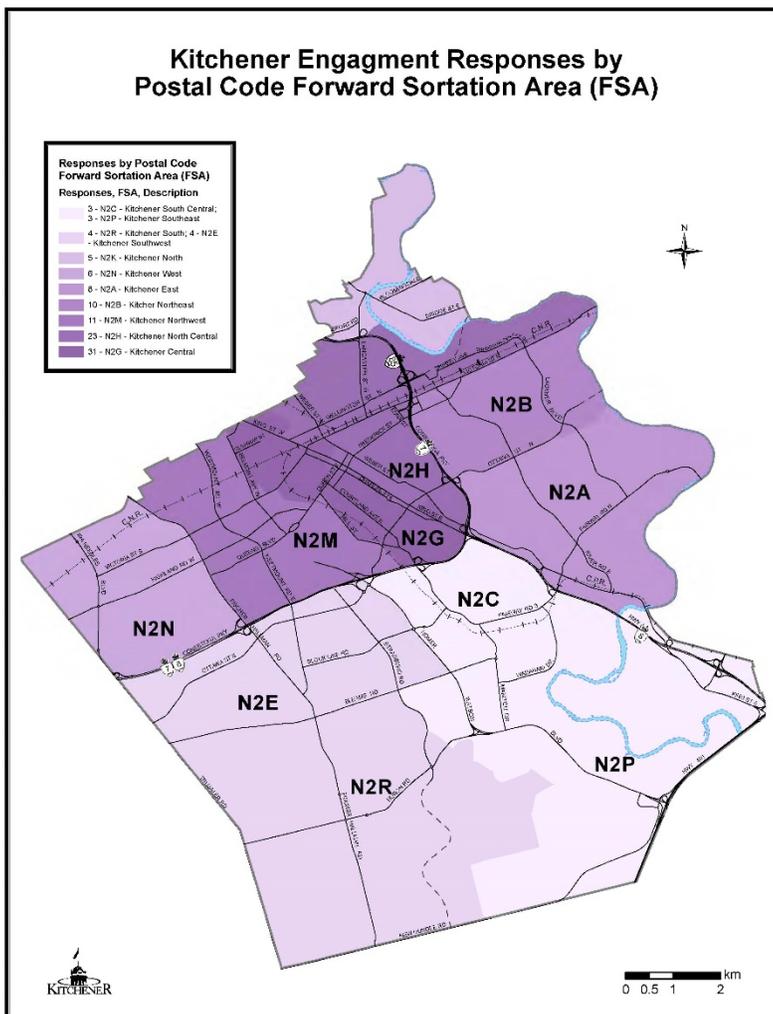


Figure 6: Engage Kitchener Respondent Distribution by Forward Sortation Area (FSA)

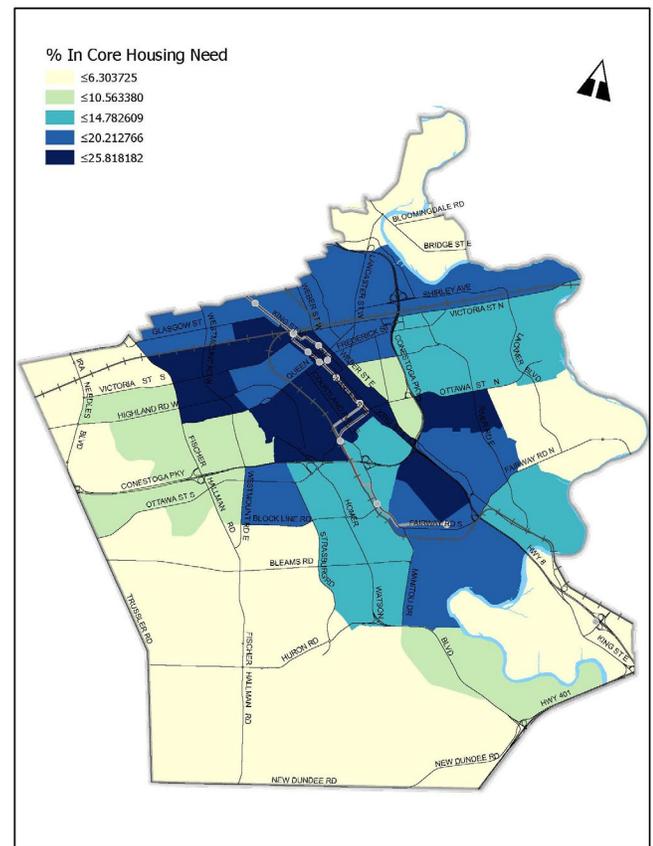


Figure 7: Percentage of Kitchener Residents in Core Housing Need by census tract.

The *Issues and Options* section of the Engage Kitchener Survey asked the following:

1. What were the top three issues that should be prioritized in the Housing Strategy?
2. What are the biggest challenges finding affordable housing?
3. Where along the housing continuum should the city should focus its efforts?
4. What were the top options to address housing issues in Kitchener?

Figure 8: Engage Kitchener Survey Responses – Issues and Options

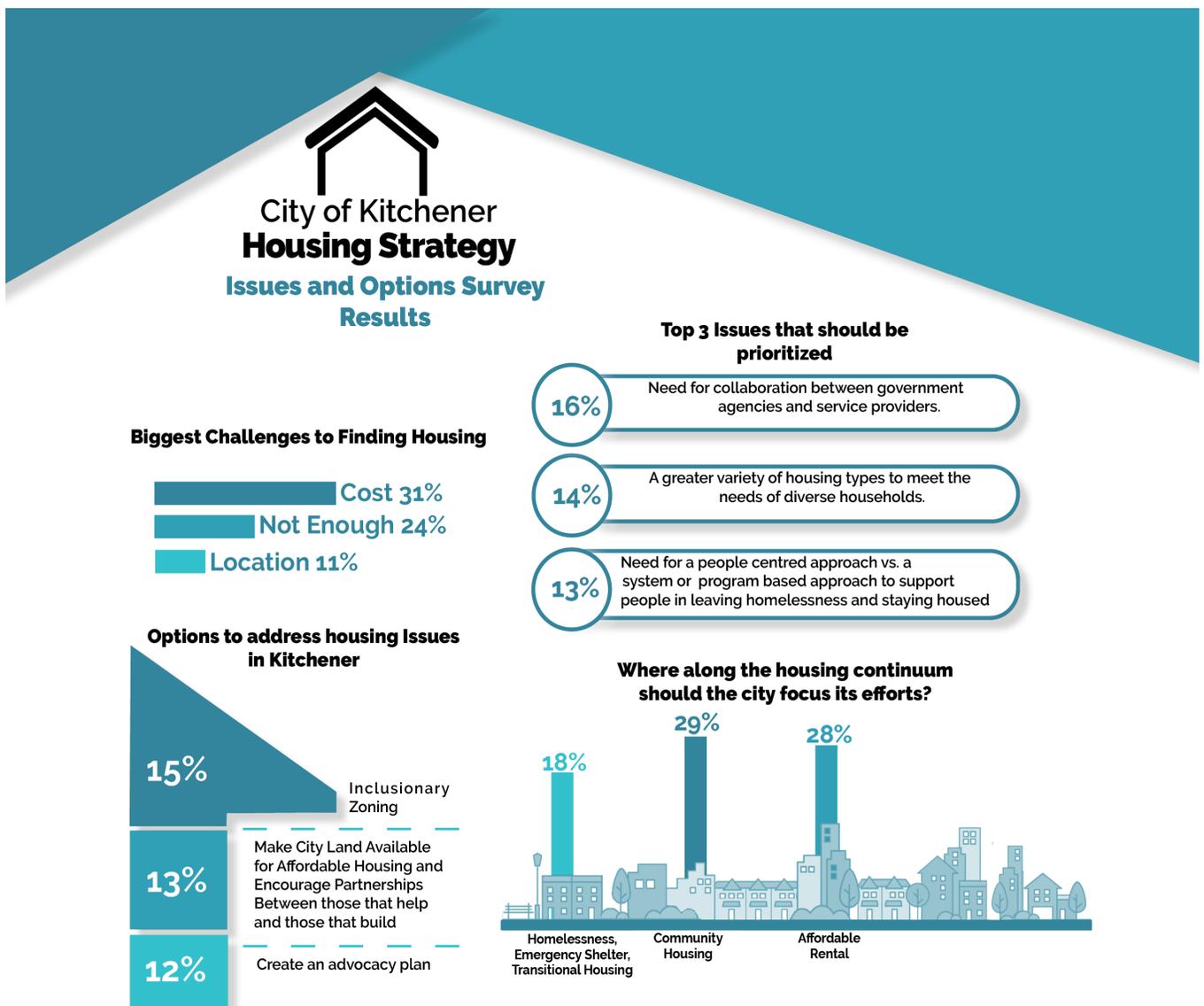
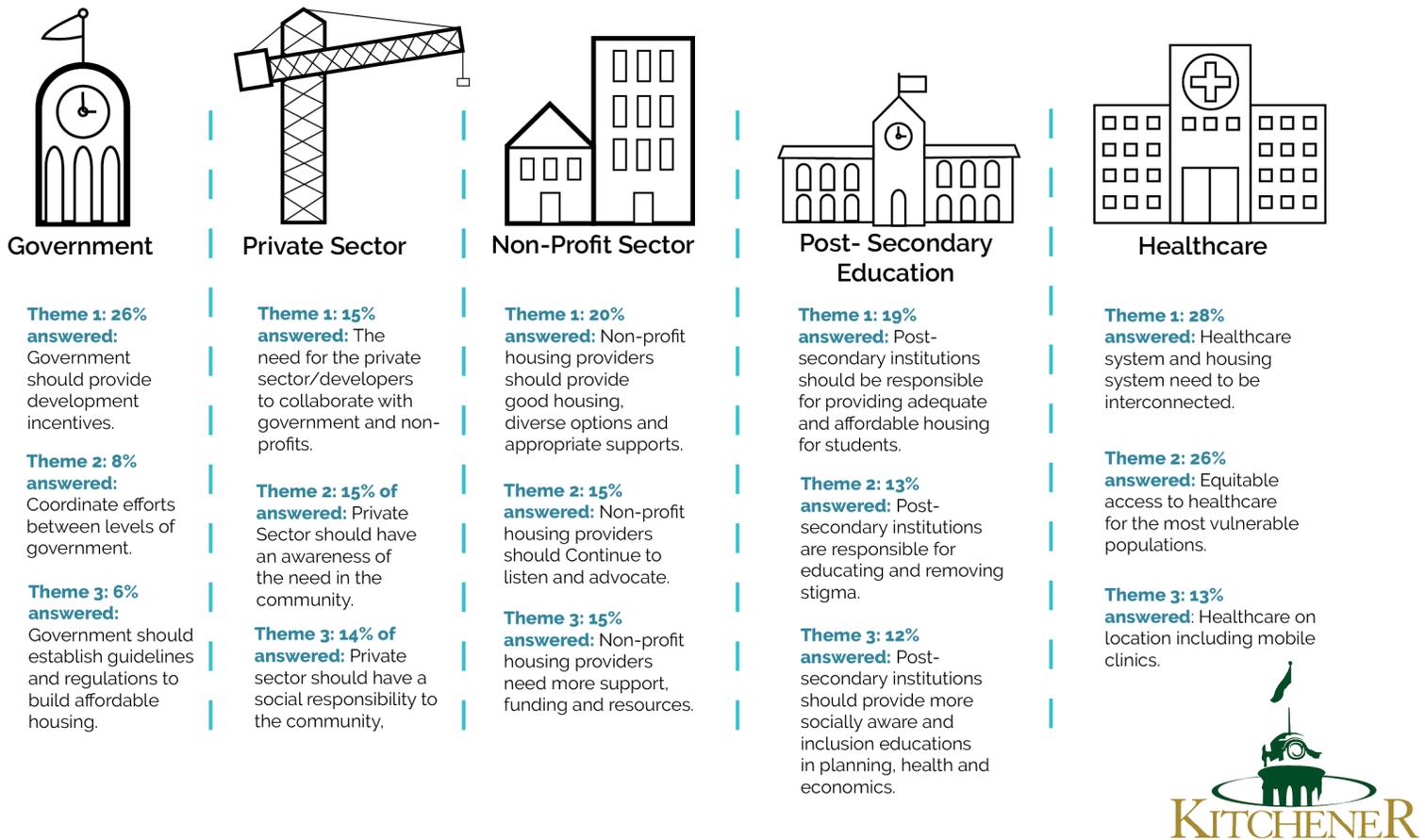


Figure 9 illustrates the major themes that emerged through analysis of the *Roles and Responsibilities* section of the Engage Kitchener Survey.

The Roles and Responsibilities section of the Engaged Kitchener Survey asked: What do you believe are the roles and responsibilities around housing of the following sectors?

Figure 9 – Engage Kitchener Survey Results – Roles and Responsibilities



“I think this is a really important issue and the most helpful thing to do **is to bring together people in the housing field** (policy makers, funders, people looking for housing, people working with those looking for housing etc.).”

- Engage Kitchener Survey Respondant

2. Pandemic

Coming out of the first pandemic wave, Kitchener retains a strong resale market for housing and applications to permit new residential development continue to be submitted to the city. However, housing has become increasingly unaffordable for an increasingly larger share of Kitchener’s population. Incomes are not keeping pace with rising costs of rental and ownership housing. Poverty and Core Housing Need is increasing in the city.

COVID-19 affected people’s lives through adjustments like working from home, losing jobs or income, not being able to hug family and friends, or battling new stresses and anxieties associated with uncertainty. For many, staying indoors and adjusting to a physically distanced life is challenging; but it has disproportionately increased risks for people who are homeless.

The usual model of sheltering the homeless involves placing several people in close proximity to one another, giving them a place to sleep and a meal to eat – with no ability to physically distance. Time allowed in a shelter is usually nighttime only, with people having to leave each morning.

ShelterCare

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Knowing that the existing shelter model would not work during the pandemic, House of Friendship, seized the opportunity to pilot its ShelterCare concept - integrating decent housing, services and health care. Acting quickly with the Region of Waterloo to find dignified shelter for homeless men, they secured a partnership with the Radisson Hotel to provide 24/7 housing for 51 men from the Charles Street Shelter, until the end of August 2020.</p> <p>Through additional partnerships, the capacity safely increased to 97 people, and healthcare was provided onsite by Inner City Health Alliance. A primary care clinic operated from 10am – 3pm, seeing 12 participants a day. A COVID-19 isolation floor allowed those with potential Covid symptoms to be tested and treated. There have been zero COVID positive cases.</p> <p>The hotel became a place where all needs were met under one roof. Staff worked closely with people to care for their overall wellbeing</p> | <p><i>“I feel like for the first time in a long time I’m ready to tackle my addictions because, in the conditions of the hotel, I am able to see that I am starting to feel like me. Thanks to the hotel team I realized that I have a life worth living and can do this.”</i> Resident</p> <p><i>“... the rest, and services at the hotel, gets participants to think about making healthy, alternative choices. Typically, at the shelter, we would have had 5 referrals to residential addiction treatments every 4-6 months whereas now we have had 5 in the last month alone.”</i> Staff</p> <p><i>“COVID-19 has created opportunities for self-reflection, and prompted discussion of how we treat marginalized populations. The pandemic showed us that challenging the status quo is essential in tackling the inequalities we see today across Canada... There is nothing radical about housing the homeless, preventing drug overdoses, feeding the hungry, increasing minimum wages, or reducing prison populations. These measures are urgently needed and are simply humane. They should be our “new normal” in Canada moving forward.”</i></p> |
|---|--|

ensuring food, quality sleep, healthcare, recreation activities, community and support are provided. Importantly, staff created a housing plan with each person, to help them move forward with their life.

The new model resulted in a safer work environment for staff, decreased overdoses (and other serious occurrences), reduced incident reports, and increased the overall well-being of participants.



Karamouzian, Mohammad, Inequality means we're not all in this together, Toronto Star, July 29, 2020.

A Better Tent City

The COVID19 pandemic has caused significant challenges for individuals in our community experiencing homelessness. People could not self-isolate without a home. Places people regularly used during the day, such as libraries, community centers, and public washrooms, were closed. In responding to the COVID19 pandemic, the Region of Waterloo received federal funding to address needs of people who were homeless and worked with community partners to temporarily create additional capacity.

The temporary increase in capacity did not meet all of the diverse needs of people who are homeless. As a grassroots response to this challenge, members of the community developed “A Better Tent City” to provide an alternative to unsanctioned tent encampments in the city. In April 2020, the owner of 41 Ardel Place (also known as LOT42) gave permission for approximately 20 individuals to tent on the property, providing access to a portion of the building including washroom facilities. This was expanded in June to include “shed” structures along with a mobile trailer adapted with shower and laundry facilities. There are approximately 40 people living on site. The organizers have indicated that it is intended to be a short-term location for the initiative



Regional, City, Service Provider Partnership to Address Homelessness

The Region of Waterloo has indicated they want to work in collaboration with municipal and community partners on a “post-pandemic” plan to re-imagine the shelter system in order to better meet the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness. This will include identifying immediate, mid-term and longer-term housing options and supports.

On July 6, 2020 Kitchener City Council passed a resolution that included:

- directing staff to temporarily suspend enforcement of the Zoning Bylaw in support of A Better Tent City pilot project at 41 Ardelt Place, for up to one year, subject to conditions;
- that the owner engage with the Region of Waterloo, City of Kitchener, community partners and site residents regarding the relocation of the facility or alternative solutions for people to support their transition to appropriate housing;
- that City staff work with Regional staff to identify and secure sites for the relocation of residents of Lot 42 and tenting encampments; and
- deferred until August 31, consideration of the motion that the City of Kitchener use the remaining \$40,000 of the 2020 Affordable Housing Strategy funding to support development of initiatives to help people move from homelessness to housing.”

On August 11, 2020 Regional Council directed regional staff to secure dormitory-style spaces for up to 12 months to accommodate a minimum of 144 adult men experiencing homelessness. Regional staff agreed that the accounting of people experiencing homelessness needs to be improved and agreed to work with service providers and municipalities to develop an accounting that included people who used the shelter system and people who were homeless and did not access the existing shelter spaces.

As part of establishing new dormitory-style shelter spaces, Region staff and shelter providers will be exploring changes to shelter programs and services to respond to individuals who are unsheltered. These changes could include an exploration of a continuum of harm reduction models within shelters, a review of service restriction practices and policies, as well as the provision of additional on-site services related to health, mental health, and addiction supports.

Recognizing that through the lens of health, safety, and infection control, the pandemic has reinforced the need to make decisions that prioritize permanent housing solutions, Regional Council also directed staff to explore developing alternative housing with support on surplus land by identifying potential sites and engaging in an Expression of Interest process. To that end, Region and City of Kitchener staff are collaborating to develop plans to utilize surplus lands to provide alternative housing and support to individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

*“This pandemic has shown that governments can solve homelessness”
Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, April 2020*

Meeting the needs of our most vulnerable citizens requires creative solutions and flexibility. The City is committed to work with the Region of Waterloo and our community partners to establish sustainable solutions to address the needs of people who are homeless in our city.

3. Where We Want To Be

Housing as a Human Right

International human rights law establishes a right to housing.

Canada committed to the United Nations that we would “recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living... including adequate food, clothing and housing.”

In 2019 Canadian law first recognized that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right through the passage of the National Housing Strategy Act.

The Act recognizes that housing is essential to people’s inherent dignity and well-being, and is essential to building sustainable and inclusive communities. The Federal government is required to develop and maintain a national housing strategy that takes a human rights-based approach to housing. This involves setting out a long-term vision for housing, establishing national goals on housing and homelessness, focusing solutions on those in greatest need and including the public in the process, especially those with lived experience of homelessness or unstable housing.⁵

In 2008 the Ontario Human Rights Commission reported on its rental housing consultation that:

“it is Ontario’s most vulnerable families and individuals who bear the human toll of inadequacies in the province’s rental housing sector... The racialization of poverty and the overlaps between mental illness and homelessness were raised repeatedly throughout the consultation...For refugees, immigrants, transgendered people, lone mothers, Aboriginal people, people with mental illnesses or other disabilities, and other people protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code, the human rights dimensions of the housing crisis are undeniable.”⁶

Un-coordinated actions between all levels of government to eliminate homelessness and to provide sufficient levels of adequate and affordable housing to meet the needs of Code-protected groups and individuals is a concern for many. Housing strategies aimed at addressing homelessness and increasing access to affordable housing in Ontario must be consistent with international human rights obligations, the Code and applicable human rights principles.⁷

⁵ Hale, Kenn, We got the Right to Housing. Now What? June 27, 2019, <https://www.acto.ca/>

⁶ OHRC

⁷ ibid

Elimination of Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY) opposition to different housing types and tenures

NIMBY opposition to affordable or supportive housing projects, and the impact of this on tenants, housing providers and society as a whole is not conducive to a just and sustainable society. People with disabilities including mental illnesses, young parents and other persons protected under the *Code* may be exposed to discriminatory comments or conduct both during the planning process and once the housing is built. In many cases, NIMBYism prevents, delays or increases the costs of developing much needed housing for *Code*-protected groups and individuals. It is time that a comprehensive strategy be developed to make sure that discriminatory NIMBYism does not hinder the creation of affordable housing for *Code*-protected people.⁸

The barriers created by NIMBY opposition cannot be overcome by any one stakeholder in isolation. The committed involvement of housing providers and developers, municipalities, municipal affordable housing committees and committees of adjustment, and other levels of government is necessary to eliminate these kinds of barriers to the creation of new and affordable housing. Neighbourhood groups, local business associations and homeowners in communities need also be aware that it is not acceptable to oppose affordable housing developments because of who will live in them.⁹

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

Kitchener is attracting a wide diversity of people eager to live and work in the community. Housing is critical to the City's long-term prosperity, as attracting and retaining residents requires housing options that serve all income levels and household types. As our city becomes more diverse, we must become a more equitable and inclusive community. A city where everyone feels like they belong, are welcome, their needs are met and they can fully share in our city's prosperity. To ensure equitable, diverse inclusive communities, housing must serve as a safety net, a platform and as a building block for inclusion.

Housing as a Safety Net

Housing offers stability and the shortage of affordable housing for people with low and moderate incomes has implications for their long-term economic security, their ability to complete education and care for household members. Housing instability includes living in substandard conditions, severe rent or housing cost burdens, being in overcrowded conditions, couch surfing, being evicted, moving frequently to reduce housing costs or avoid homelessness, and homelessness itself. Any of these can be dangerous for health and well-being for adults and especially for children. Needed reforms include strengthening the legal and consumer protection framework for all renters; increasing housing assistance for low-income renters; and transforming the way housing assistance is provided.¹⁰

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ https://www.urban.org/research/publication/housing-safety-net/view/full_report

A Reimagined Shelter and Supportive Housing System

“We have the opportunity to decide if we go back to the status quo, or if we build upon the ShelterCare model of saving lives. By providing a dignified environment with wrap around supports housing and service providers can engage in healing trauma and help those who are homeless believe they have a life worth living....Lack of funding is a big problem, there is so much uncertainty of what will happen after August and we cannot sustain this effective model without funds.” House of Friendship

4. How We Can Get There

Guiding Principles

- **Stable, secure, affordable housing is a human right**

For the first time the federal government has created a national housing strategy recognizing that housing is a human right. The City of Kitchener has an opportunity to localize implementation of housing as a human right. The existing standard in shelters does not meet human right to housing standards. There is an opportunity in working together that we can achieve a reimagined shelter system that includes sufficient housing with supports to meet needs and eliminate homelessness in our city.

- **People focused –think about the people most affected**

The Needs Assessment and the responses to the engagement survey indicate that more than half of residents in Kitchener have affordability issues. This is a relatively new phenomenon that has been increasing since 2016. We need to develop strategies to address affordability issues along most of the housing continuum.

- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles help identify and remove barriers and reinforce best practices**

Equity describes fairness and justice in outcomes. It is not about the equal delivery of services or distribution of resources, it is about recognizing diversity and disadvantage, and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes.

Diversity is a fact in our city. The Needs Assessment clearly showed the diverse range of people in terms of age, gender, race, ethnic origin, immigration, education attainment, income and other attributes. We understand that some diverse voices feel unheard, undervalued or unseen in our community and don't feel represented in decision-making. We have heard the city needs more diversity in housing form or housing stock for people to be better able to live affordably.

Inclusion is a choice in our city.

“Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, valued, respected, supported and can fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people”
Towards Toronto 2015

- **Explicitly Anti-Racist/Anti-Discriminatory**

An affordable housing strategy must be anti-racist because racism has been and continues to be a force limiting the access of housing to racialized people. Furthermore, racism has been at the root of many historical attempts to use zoning to exclude people from wealthier neighbourhoods with a majority white population. Even if we were to assume that racism is not currently a motivating source behind continued exclusionary zoning, it is nonetheless likely to contribute to income-based segregation which will also contribute to segregation of any racialized people who are also economically disadvantaged. In other words, exclusionary zoning can reinforce racial discrimination and economic disparities that already exist in society. It is also important to note that discrimination also exists in the private housing market, and plays a significant role in the attainability and affordability of housing in the bigger picture.

Kitchener has made some important changes in allowing tiny homes, second suites triplexes etcetera in its new zoning bylaw to make more affordable forms of housing available across the city. However, it is still important to acknowledge the negative effect of exclusionary zoning and to really consider the extent to which it still exists. This could include restrictions on height, minimum lot sizes, spacing requirements or anything else that limits multi-home buildings. The ongoing part of Crozby- phase 2 with the neighbourhood reviews, can have a significant effect on housing affordability in Kitchener.

- **Realistic Timelines and Achievable Goals**

An ambitious list of actions are under consideration with short term and long term solutions. Where possible SMART actions – specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely are proposed. Public engagement is being sought to gain input on priorities and timing.



“I work with and advocate for government-assisted refugees. It is becoming an uphill battle to secure permanent accommodation for the clients that we serve. They face regular discrimination in a market that currently favours landlords - discrimination for being on government assistance, not having a Canadian credit history, having a large family size. [...]

Above is just one example, but there are many other **marginalized groups in the city that face unique barriers in accessing housing**. The City should have an understanding of how these barriers can intersect to bar people from accessing adequate, affordable housing.”

- Engage Kitchener Survey Respondant

Housing Strategy Overview

The Housing Strategy proposes:

- Creation of a collaborative, co-ordinated Housing Advocacy Plan (to end homelessness)
- New ways of working together
- Focusing on what Kitchener can uniquely do
- Advocating for others in what they need to do
- Making best use of resources, and
- Five Strategies
 1. Meeting Needs
 2. What the City Can Do
 3. Working Together
 4. Being Informed and Informing
 5. Implementation/Work Plan

5. Strategies

Proposed Strategic Actions Include:

Strategy 1: Meeting Needs

1.1 Establish the following housing targets:

- **450 units of transitional and supportive housing** for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are needed. This includes approximately 170 housing units for men, 70 housing units for women, 60 housing units for youth, 50 housing units for people with acute concurrent mental health and addiction challenges and 100 units for people with cognitive challenges.
- **5,000 units of community housing** for people with low and modest incomes on the Housing Waiting List wanting to live in Kitchener are needed. **Note: Increase from 3,000 households reported in Dec 2019**
- **9,300 new affordable rental housing units** at monthly rents under \$1,300 for people with household incomes under \$63,000 are needed. Nearly 4,000 of these needed units are for people paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

Strategy 2: What the City Can Do

Staff and the Advisory Committee have focused their efforts on identifying roles and responses that are unique to the city and where the city has jurisdiction or resources. All agreed that the Region of Waterloo should continue with its mandate, roles and responsibilities regarding homelessness and housing. Effort has been made for the city actions to be complementary and supportive of Region of Waterloo mandate, roles and responsibilities.

Policies

2.1 Report to Council on the feasibility and implications of the following potential policies:

- Inclusionary Housing Policy and implementing Zoning Bylaw (September 2020)
- Lodging House Policy (December 2020)
- Parking Waiver Policy and implementing Zoning Bylaw for affordable housing developments (December 2020)
- Parkland Dedication Waiver Policy for affordable housing developments (2021)
- Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy to mitigate the impacts resulting from redevelopment of purpose-built rental apartments on current tenants, including consideration of developers providing advanced notice and assistance to residents including plans for relocating existing residents Zoning Amendments (Propose doing this in collaboration with Cities of Cambridge and Waterloo in 2021)

- Request Region to include consideration of funding for growth related (future) affordable housing developments in creation of development charge and community benefit policies (2021)
- Community Improvement Plan for affordable housing (2021)
- Request Region explores and adopts policy around HomeShare living model

Development Approval Process

2.2 Continue improving the development approval process with input from the development industry and the community

Incentives, Fees and Waivers

2.3 Report to Council on the feasibility and implications of the following incentives, fees and waivers:

- Continue the Fee Waiver Policy for non-profit organizations and expand its application to affordable housing units provided in a private sector development applications.
- Implement a 20-year, interest-free deferral of development charges for eligible affordable housing projects.
- Request the Region and School Boards to jointly review with the City a reduction of Development Charges for affordable housing developments.
- Establishment of an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to provide ongoing funding to support Housing Initiatives.

City Lands

2.4 Develop a strategy for the use of specific surplus city lands for affordable housing, including:

- Identifying City and Regional site(s) for development of permanent supportive housing for people to move to from Lot 42 A Better Tent City, tenting encampments, shelters and homelessness (immediate); and
- A “priority” Pilot Project involving supportive and community rental housing in proximity to transit /major transit center (initiate in 2020)
- Identify city lands suitable for others to develop for affordable housing and seek to incorporate units that house people leaving homelessness, supportive housing, community housing, below market rental and below market ownership (2021)
- Feasibility of including affordable housing in the development of new or redeveloped City facilities, eg. community centers, fire stations (2022)
- Kitchener playing a leadership role in advancing innovative mixed housing communities utilizing strategic parcels of city land, as a model for other Canadian communities to replicate. (2022)

Strategy 3: Working Together

Advocacy

3.1 Request the Region of Waterloo develop in collaboration with local municipalities, non-profit housing, support, and philanthropic organizations and the private sectors a capital and operating funding strategy to end homelessness through a reimagined shelter, supportive and community housing plan. Integrate affordable housing, economic development and transit strategies.

3.2 Jointly advocate for Provincial and Federal funding for housing acquisition, renovation and development of affordable housing and related supports along the housing continuum as part of community building, sustainability and economic recovery, including funding and supports for:

- **House of Friendship** seeking 2 sites and funding for the ShelterCare integrated health and transitional housing concept (80 units) and for supportive housing project (60 units)
- **YWCA-KW** seeking a site and funding for approximately 30 one-bedroom units of affordable supportive housing for women leaving homelessness
- **The Working Centre** to acquire and renovate a second site (Water Street 2.0) to house and support people who are homeless and to add 40 units of housing to add to their affordable housing portfolio
- **Kitchener Housing Inc (KHI)** seeking a site and work in partnership with a developer to create new community housing and to purchase buildings to preserve affordable housing
- **One Roof's** proposal to develop approximately 58 units of supportive housing for youth who are homeless in modular housing on their site
- **Waterloo Region Habitat for Humanity** seeking sites for affordable home ownership
- **Indwell** seeking 2-3 more sites in Kitchener for approximately 120 to 180 supportive housing units
- **Menno Homes** seeking funding to complete its project under development
- **Habilitation** seeking funding for a supportive housing project
- **Reception House Waterloo Region** seeking a site and funding for the development of a Refugee Services Hub.
- **John Howard Society Waterloo-Wellington** seeking funding and resources for a full-time staff member to help develop a housing strategy/model
- **Church and Religious Institutions** within the City have expressed interest in redeveloping their surplus lands to accommodate affordable housing. However, they often lack the capital funds and development experience to do so.
- **Private Sector Affordable Housing developers** have expressed interest in developing more affordable housing units, but face barriers around acquiring sites and capital funds.

- 3.3 Request the Region of Waterloo to revise its Housing and Homelessness Plan to incorporate local municipal input and needs and develop future plans in collaboration with local municipalities, non-profit housing, support and philanthropic organizations and the private sector.
- 3.4 Request (through AMO) the Government of Ontario to develop and adopt a provincial housing strategy including measurable targets and provision of sufficient funds to accelerate progress on ending homelessness and ensuring access of all Ontarians, including those of limited income, to housing of an adequate standard without discrimination. It should also take into consideration the needs of Indigenous people, people with disabilities including mental illness, women experiencing domestic violence, lone parents, immigrants and newcomers and other people living in poverty or with low incomes.

Partnerships

- 3.5 Develop jointly a Region/City Charter to ensure more collaboration and opportunities to identify and address housing challenges in Kitchener.
- 3.6 Continue working with the private sector and facilitate partnerships with non-profit partners to provide more affordable housing

Strategy 4: Being Informed/Informing

Housing data specific to the City of Kitchener has been challenging to collect. Renovictions remove affordable housing and generally result in much higher rents being charged post renovation or redevelopment. Commodification of housing, where housing is held on speculation, for investment, or used to generate income instead of as a place to live is increasing through Airbnbs, rental condos, or other untracked rental housing types.

- 4.1 Provide regular updates to the Council, the public and staff on housing needs assessments
- 4.2 Undertake additional work to assess housing needs for:
- People who are homeless
 - Indigenous Peoples
 - Seniors
 - Immigrants
 - Students
 - Future population
 - LGBTQ+
 - Women
- 4.3 Track and monitor renovictions, where tenants are displaced from their homes to allow major renovations or redevelopment to proceed. Track and monitor housing held for investment in Kitchener.

- 4.4 Use the City’s Social Media Platform to engage and inform the public on addressing housing issues in the city.
- 4.5 Establish a Lived-Experience advisory group to advise staff on addressing housing issues in the city and to monitor strategy implementation and measure success.

Strategy 5: Implementation/Work Plan

- 5.1 Develop a prioritized annual work plan to implement the Housing Strategy including timing and responsibilities, to be used to inform annual budgets
- 5.2 Recommend an annual operating amount to support housing initiatives (This needs to be quantified)
- 5.3 Provide staffing to support implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy (This needs to be quantified)
- 5.4 Provide regular public reports on success and challenges in implementing the Housing Strategy



InDwell supportive housing proposal at St. Marks

“The City of Kitchener has the opportunity to be a leader in Waterloo Region. We need bold actions to make a significant impact on this issue. We can't tweak our way to a solution. We need thousands of new affordable units and bold, decisive actions are the only thing that will get us ahead of the curve.”

Engage Kitchener Survey Respondant

Appendix 1: Affordable Housing Advisory Committee – Sub-Committees Work Summary

Defining Affordability Sub-Committee

The AHS Defining Affordability sub-committee is tasked with defining what the term ‘Affordable’ means in a Kitchener Specific context. The sub-committee began by analyzing datasets from a variety of sources including the City of Kitchener Housing Needs Assessment, Statistics Canada, The Region of Waterloo, Kitchener Housing Inc and ACORN Canada. The sub-committee decided to further investigate how ACORN Canada suggested the Council of the City of Toronto define affordability. This definition is notably not tied to Average Market Rent (AMR) as these rates rise much faster than rents, but instead is tied to Area Median Income (AMI), and has set rates for people earn the minimum wage and who are on Government assistance. As the minimum wage is provincially set, some of the data from ACORN’s document Affordable for Who? Is applicable in Kitchener and has set \$700 a month as what is deemed affordable.

City staff have been asked by the sub-committee to further connect with ACORN to discuss methodology and how to adapt this to a Kitchener-specific definition. The sub-committee will review work done by City staff at the next meeting, and discuss the next steps required for finalizing the ‘Affordable Definition’.

Engagement Sub-Committee

The AHS Engagement sub-committee is tasked with helping City staff build and implement the engagement plan for the Housing Strategy. The sub-committee began by expressing the need for the City to explore new ways of engaging with the public, in particular how to move away from point in time engagement to meaningful long-term engaging, empowering and collaborating with people with lived experience. The Social Development Centre and lived experience groups (Disabilities and Human Rights, ALIVE, People’s Action Group, Alliance Against Poverty) have revised the Terms of Reference to reflect the direction the sub-committee would like to head.

The revised Terms of Reference include review of guiding assumptions about engagement in the process of creation and implementation of the strategy, representative group composition, expanded term, compensation and responsibilities, measuring impact. The sub-committee has asked that the revised terms of reference be reviewed for adoption. The sub-committee noted that this new group needs to be involved during the engagement of the draft strategy and after the creation of the Housing Strategy in order to be part of implementation.

Research and Best Practice sub-committee

The AHS Research and Best Practices sub-committee is tasked with reviewing and gathering relevant research, news articles, and any other resources focused on affordable housing in order to support the Housing Strategy. Research is forwarded to the sub-committee and discussed. Next steps for this sub-committee may include turning their focus to research that is relevant to the Draft Strategy document.

Lodging House sub-committee

Due to the COVID-19 and the City’s pandemic response, many of the necessary City staff could not begin work on this sub-committee. In discussion with Licensing, Planning, By-law Enforcement, and Kitchener Fire work on this sub-committee is set to begin in Fall 2020.

Glossary (Work in Progress)

The purpose of the Glossary is to provide definitions to some of the terms used in the strategy, as recommended by members of the advisory committee. The intention is this list expands and becomes finalized through community engagement and further conversations with the Advisory Committee.

Affordable Housing (general definition): generally refers to housing people with low-to-moderate-incomes priced at or below the average market rent or selling price for comparable housing in a specific geographic area. CMHC (2018) defines affordable housing as that which costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.

Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement (2020) defines affordable housing in two ways:

a) in the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:

1. housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
2. housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;

b) in the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:

1. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
2. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.

In reality, it's a broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing.

Affordable (Kitchener Specific): Definition is currently being addressed by the AHS Defining Affordability Sub-Committee.

Community Housing:

Core Housing Need:

Housing Continuum:

Housing System: The set of public and private investments, regulations, and legal and policy frameworks that shape safety, stability, and affordability in housing and diversity, engagement, and cohesion in neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions.

Inclusionary Housing: Housing within a market development required by Official Plan policy and zoning bylaws to be affordable. Must be financially feasible for developer. Introduced into

the *Planning Act* in 2019, and revised in September 2019 to be applicable near existing and proposed ION stations.

Lived Experience:

Market Housing:

Rooming House:

Social Housing: is government-assisted housing that provides lower cost rental units to households with low-to-moderate incomes and can include:

- public housing (owned directly or indirectly by service managers)
- not-for-profit and co-operative housing
- rent supplement programs (often in the private market)
- rural and native housing (owned by Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services) (Ontario, 2018)

Supportive Housing: is a type of social housing for people who need help to live independently. Currently, supportive housing consists of projects occupied by tenants who have services provided by a support service agency. Supportive housing is generally administered and funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Some service managers may administer some supportive housing that is focused on the needs of people who have been homeless, or who are at high risk of homelessness, while others address needs of people with developmental, cognitive and or physical challenges (Ontario, 2018)

Transitional Housing: can be broadly defined as the provision of affordable, temporary housing paired with a mix of appropriate supportive services. The goal of these services is to facilitate an individual's movement to permanent, stable housing and independent living. Transitional housing is intended for people who need some degree of structure, support, supervision and skill building in order to successfully transition to permanent housing. As participants' lives become more stable, providers often help them find permanent housing. (Ontario, 2016)

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