



Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) Agenda

Thursday, November 27, 2025, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Conestoga Room

City of Kitchener

200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 407

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee shall assist the participating municipalities in fulfilling the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by providing vision and advice regarding the removal of barriers.

People interested in participating in this meeting can email Administrative Coordinator, Janis McKenzie at Janis.McKenzie@kitchener.ca. Please refer to the delegation section on the agenda below for the registration deadline. Written comments received will be circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and will form part of the public record.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. If you require assistance to take part in a city meeting or event, please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994

Coordinating Municipality - Kitchener

Co-Chairs - Tamara Cooper, Alyssa Clelland

Pages

1. Commencement

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging the land on which we gather today, recognizing that the land in which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnawbe and Chonnonton peoples. We would also like to acknowledge the enduring knowledge, presence and deep-rooted traditions of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit who continue to enrich our community to this day.

2. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interests

Members of Council and members of the City's local boards/committees are required to file a written statement when they have a conflict of interest. If a conflict is declared, please visit www.kitchener.ca/conflict to submit your written form.

3. **Delegations**
Pursuant to Council's Procedural By-law, delegations are permitted to address the Committee for a maximum of five (5) minutes. All Delegations must register by 10:00 a.m. on November 27th, 2025, in order to participate in the meeting.
4. **Discussion Items**
 - 4.1 **Roll Call - Introductions** 10 m
 - 4.2 **Minutes for Approval**
 - 4.3 **The Built Environment Sub Committee Report** 20 m
Paula Saunders, Chair, Built Environment Sub Committee, will be in attendance to present this matter.
5. **Recess and Reconvene** 10 m
6. **Discussion Items (Cont'd)**
 - 6.1 **Annual Status Update - Woolwich Township** 10 m 3
Alex Kirchin, Deputy Clerk, Township of Woolwich, will be in attendance to present this matter.
 - 6.2 **Website Refresh - City of Kitchener** 30 m
Hillary Molinaro, Program Manager and Christa Hicks, Manager, Communications, City of Kitchener, will be in attendance to present this item.
 - 6.3 **Website Refresh - City of Waterloo** 30 m 6
Janice Maarhuis, Website Redesign Lead and Brandon Currie, Supervisor, Digital and Web Services, City of Waterloo, will be in attendance to present this matter.
 - 6.4 **Official Plan - City of Kitchener** 30 m 20
Sean Harrigan, Planner and Elyssa Pompa, Planner, City of Kitchener, will be in attendance to present this matter.
7. **Information Items**
 - 7.1 **Region's Plan and Budget Engagement - Region of Waterloo**
A staff member will be coming to speak to the committee about how they can provide feedback on the upcoming budget and plan for the Region.
 - 7.2 **Terms of Reference Update** 62
8. **Adjournment**

Please send regrets to Janis McKenzie - janis.mckenzie@kitchener.ca

Township of Woolwich Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024 to 2027 Status Update to GRAAC

The following document outlines the various initiatives in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, as well as a status update on what staff have been able to accomplish in 2025 and 2024.

2025 Initiatives

Initiative 1 – Ensure Woolwich’s website meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements

Woolwich continues to train staff and meet accessibility requirements for our website. This initiative will continue to be an **ongoing** initiative for Woolwich.

Initiative 2 – Continue to implement online payment systems for more services.

In 2025 Woolwich began the implementation of twelve (12) online payment systems which allows for a more accessible payment option for residents and system users. In **2026**, Woolwich implemented two more online payment systems for Burn Permits and Requests for Property Information. This initiative will continue to be an **ongoing** initiative for Woolwich.

Initiative 3 – Consider implementing routine document and website accessibility training for all new staff.

This initiative has been **deferred to 2026**. This initiative was originally with tied to a new onboarding program through the Human Resources Department. Our Human Resources staff have switched paths in terms of their onboarding program initiatives. As such, accessibility staff will take over this project in 2026.

Initiative 4 – Build an accessible public washroom in St. Jacobs

Due to budget constraints, this project has been **deferred indefinitely at this time**.

Initiative 6 – Various annual facility improvements.

Every year, staff add various facility and outdoor space improvements to the multi-year accessibility plan to ensure Woolwich is working towards improving accessibility features throughout the Township. The following is the list of projects for 2024 and their status updates.

- Breslau Community Centre: accessible porch and entrance with additional handrail. **Completed**. Exterior park washroom **deferred to 2026**.

- Sunset Hills Estate Park: playground development with accessible features. **Deferred to 2026.**
- Heidelberg Park: renovations to include accessible features including a 3 metre stone dust pathway to facilitate access to various park amenities. **Completed.**
- Hopewell Heights Park: renovations to include accessible features. **Deferred.**
- Implemented accessibility improvements found during updated facility accessibility audit: Funding was not available for accessible upgrades from the facility accessibility audit in the 2025 budget.

2024 Initiatives

Initiative 1 – Ensure Woolwich’s website meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements

Woolwich continues to train staff and meet accessibility requirements for our website. This initiative will continue to be an **ongoing** initiative for Woolwich.

Initiative 2 – Continue to implement online payment systems for more services.

In 2024 Woolwich began the implementation of twelve (12) online payment systems which allows for a more accessible payment option for residents and system users. These include, but are not limited to, Freedom of Information payments, Vendor Licensing payments, and Liquor Licensing payments. This initiative will continue to be an **ongoing** initiative for Woolwich.

Initiative 3 – Consider implementing routine document and website accessibility training for all new staff.

This initiative has been **deferred to 2025**. Our Human Resources staff have been making changes to the onboarding program at Woolwich during 2024 but hit some setbacks along the way which has resulted in a deferral for this initiative.

Initiative 4 – Complete an updated audit for all Woolwich Facilities from the 2007 Facility Building Accessibility Audit.

Complete. Staff were able to successfully complete this initiative and now have an updated audit to help guide future multi-year accessibility plans and continue improving accessibility in Woolwich.

Initiative 5 – Various annual facility improvements.

Every year, staff add various facility and outdoor space improvements to the multi-year accessibility plan to ensure Woolwich is working towards improving accessibility features throughout the Township. The following is the list of projects for 2024 and their status updates.

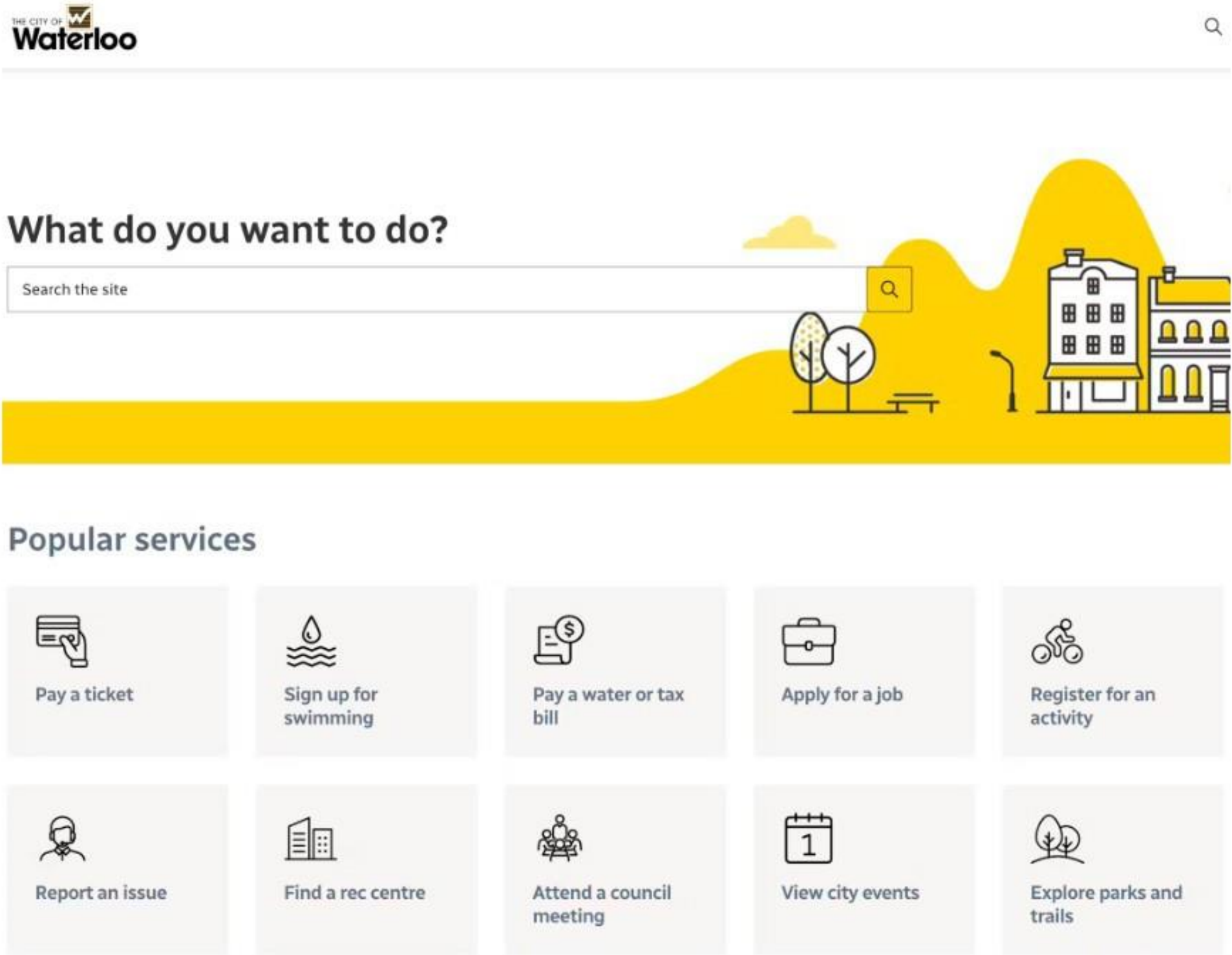
- Southpark Wood Park: development of a new park to include a multi-use trail, accessible multi-use pad, and accessible playground features. **Completed.**
- Maryhill Park Playground: replacement park to include accessible features (accessible ramp, swing and sensory features). **Completed**
- Bolender Park: paving of the parking lot and installation of accessible parking stall. **Completed.**
- Breslau Memorial Park Splashpad: installation of a splashpad with accessible entranceway and accessible splashpad features. **Completed.**
- St. Jacobs Arena: accessible upgrades to the washrooms and lobby. **Completed.**

Other accessibility improvements completed that were not in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:

- Playground upgrades:
 - Riverside Meadows Park (St. Jacobs) upgraded surfacing to be more accessible
 - Valley View Park (St. Jacobs) upgraded surfacing to be more accessible
 - Westfield Park (Elmira) upgraded and removed inaccessible border to playground
 - Southpark Park: installed multi-use pad and pathway

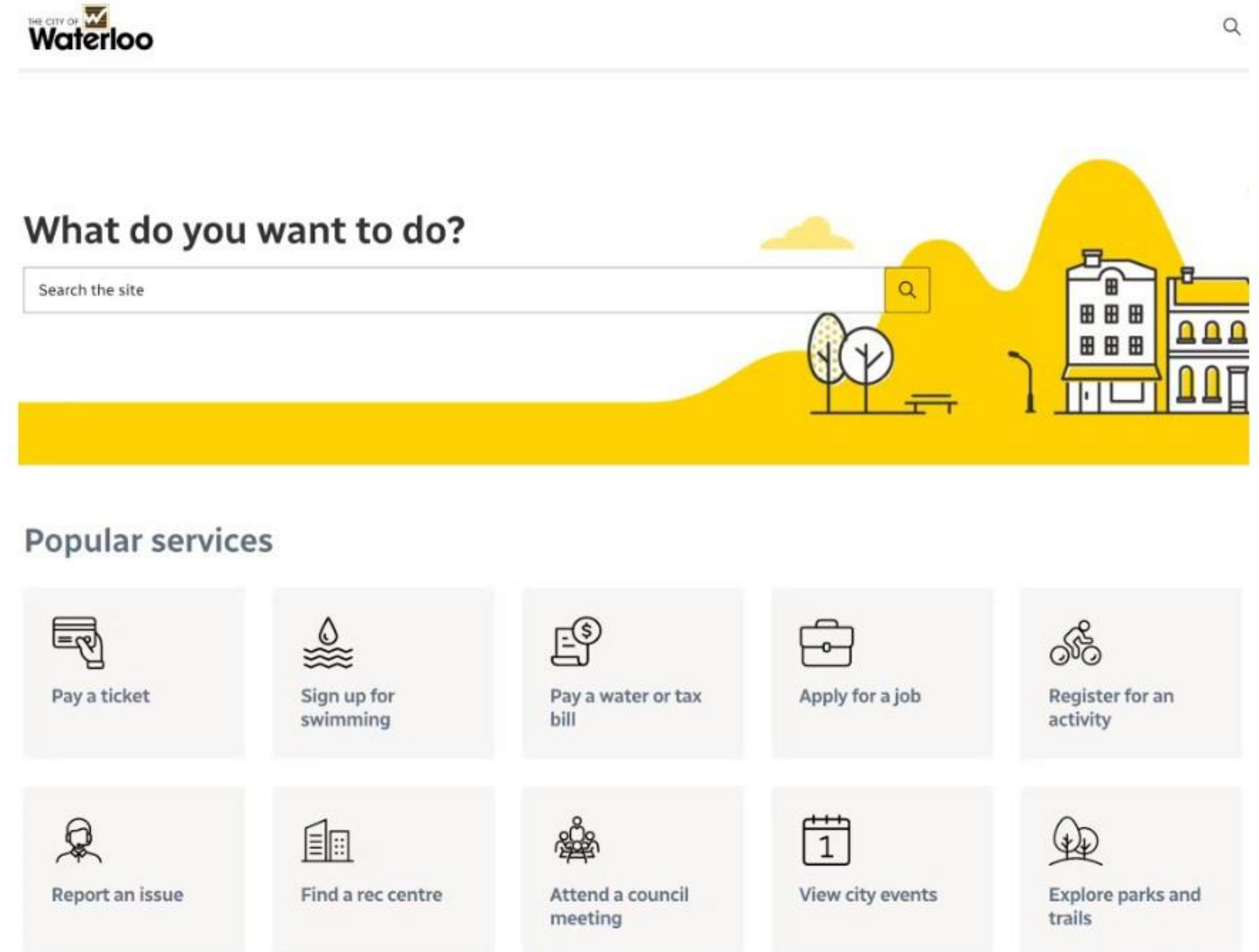
Upcoming refresh of Waterloo.ca

GRAAC Presentation, November 2025



Project overview

- Current website launched in 2018
- Work began on new site in October 2024
- New site launching on December 8
- Scope - CMS upgrade and site-wide redesign
- Platform - Govstack by GHD (formerly eSolutions)
- Content and visual design done in-house



Project goals

- Make the website "work like an app"
- Focus on services and getting stuff done
- Modernize content to work with voice + AI search
- Build a foundation for other digital improvements

What do you want to do?

Search the site



Popular services



Pay a ticket



Sign up for swimming



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Apply for a job



Register for an activity



Report an issue



Find a rec centre



Attend a council meeting



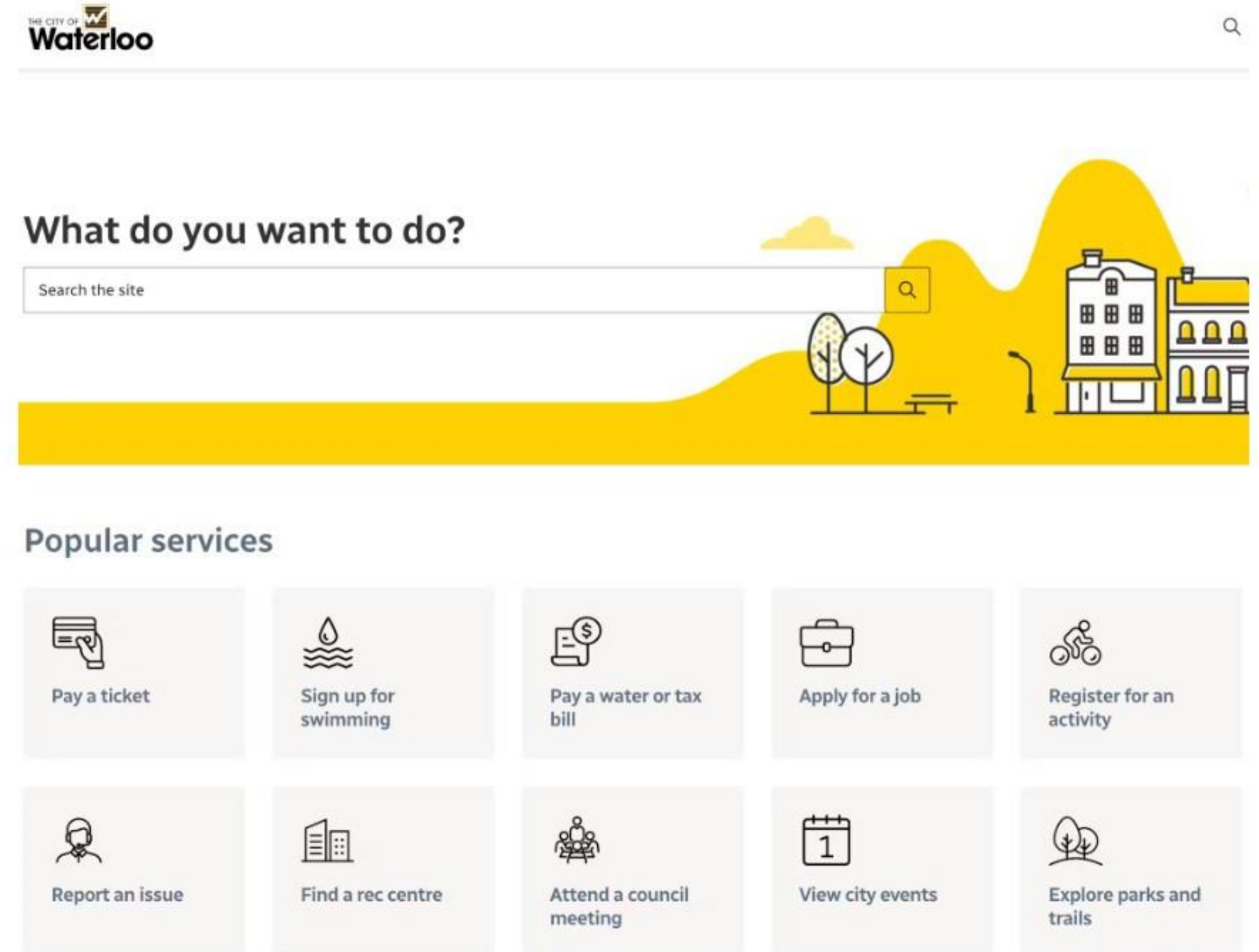
View city events



Explore parks and trails

Accessibility issues with current site

- Content > grade 6 reading level
- Unremediated PDFs
- Anchor links and accordion behaviour
- Link and table descriptions
- Mobile layout issues



Accessibility fixes

- 95% of content at target reading level
- Remediate remaining non-compliant PDFs
- Tables now have captions and summaries
- Accordions and anchors rebuilt
- Image alt text follows image across site
- Sequential steps for longer processes

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Verification process

- Accessibility site audit in progress by Accessibrand
- Testing with seniors and English-language learners
- Siteimprove in use for quality assurance
- Anticipated compliance with AODA requirements (WCAG 2.0 AA)

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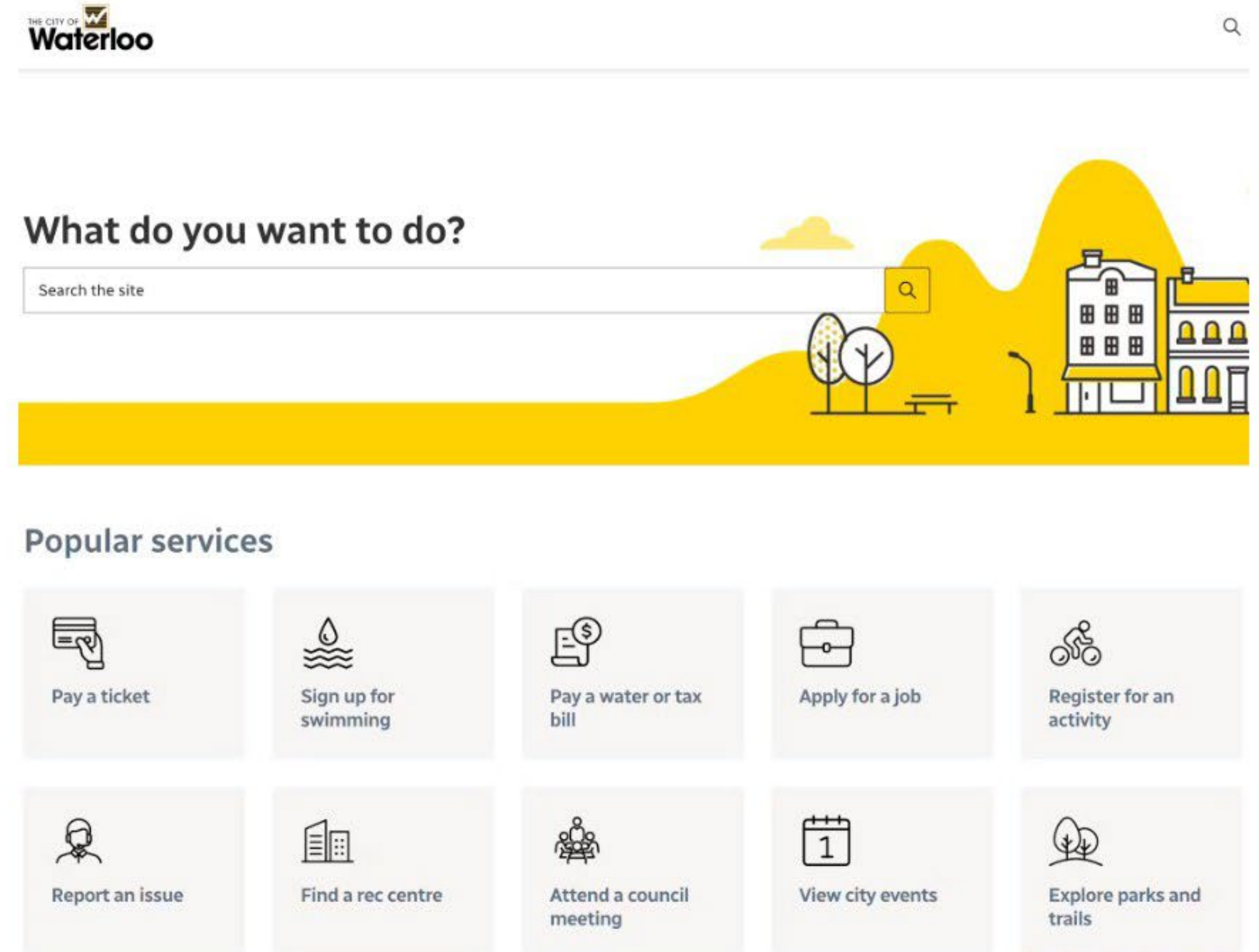
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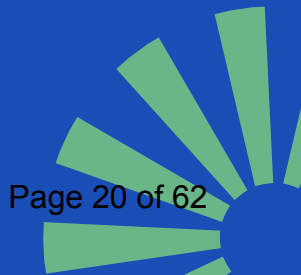


Explore parks and trails



Kitchener 2051 Official Plan Update

Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
November 27, 2025



Objectives

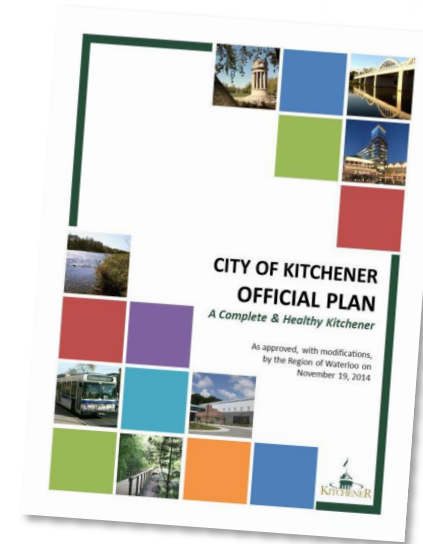
- Provide a status update on Kitchener 2051
- Overview of policy directions
- Hear your early feedback
- Next Steps

What is Kitchener 2051?

As Kitchener grows to become a city of up to 450,000 people, we need a new plan.

Kitchener's Official Plan (2014) is now 10+ years old and due for an update. Provincial legislation requires that Official Plans be updated every 10 years or sooner.

Kitchener 2051 is a process to prepare a new Official Plan that will guide growth and shape the way that neighbourhoods evolve and change over the next 25 years.



Timelines

We Are Here



Phase 1:
Groundwork
Summer 2024

Phase 2:
Public Launch
Fall 2024

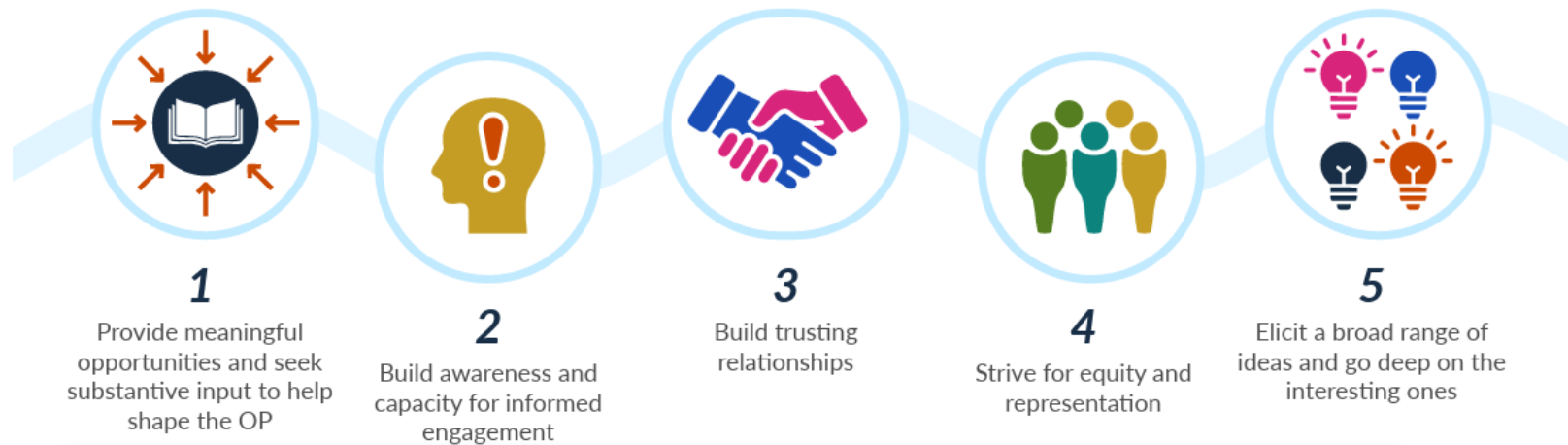
Phase 3:
Framing the Plan
Winter / Spring 2025

Phase 4:
Draft Official Plan
Fall 2025

**Council
Decision**

Equity

1. Process
2. Policy
3. Presentation



Realizing Our Vision – a Sense of Belonging

Kitchener's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

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



Community Values

- Affordability
- Thoughtful & Resilient Growth
- Access & Inclusion
- Safe & Sustainable Mobility Options
- Mutual Care & Belonging



BIG IDEAS

Our Neighbourhoods

Our Economy

Our Environment

Three big ideas that weave their way through all the policies and objective



Approach to Growth

How and where Kitchener will grow and change by 2051.



We Are Here



Official Plan Policies



Vision, Purpose, and Framework

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

	2024	2051	Change
Population	318,280	446,000	+128,000 (45%)
Jobs	126,700	180,800	+54,000 (42%)



Vision, Purpose, and Framework

Our Challenges

- Housing Attainability
- Climate Emergency
- Aging Infrastructure
- Reconciliation
- Safety & Belonging
- Economic Uncertainty

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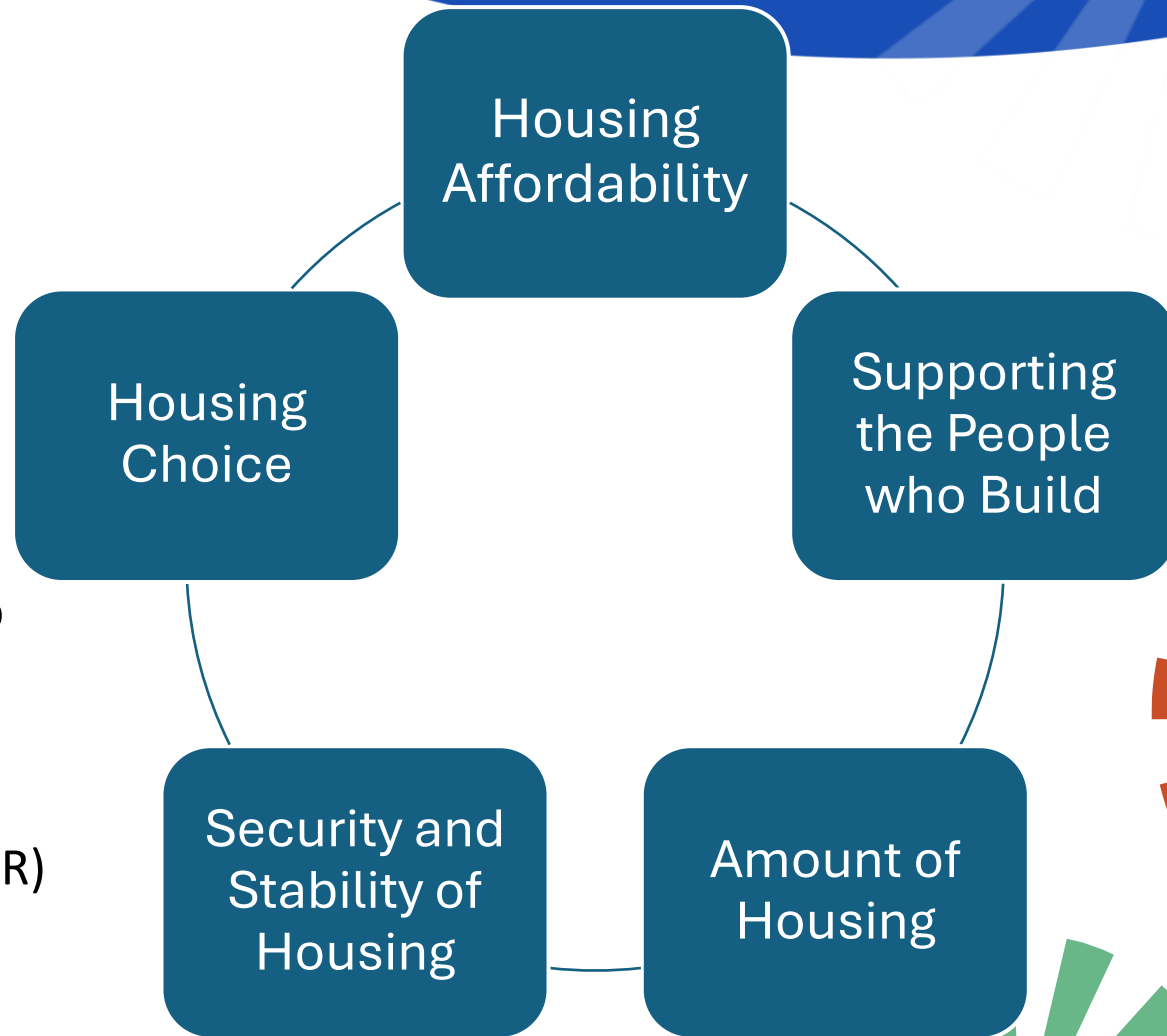
A Home For Everyone

Annual Affordability Targets:

- 9% (216 homes) affordable ownership
- 22% (528 homes) affordable rental

2024 Affordability Thresholds:

- Rent: \$1,117 (bachelor) – \$1,779 (3+BR)
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Mobility

City Infrastructure

- Equitable and accessible mobility network for all ages and abilities
- Complete Street Guidelines
- (Re)Construction of City Infrastructure and Community Facilities

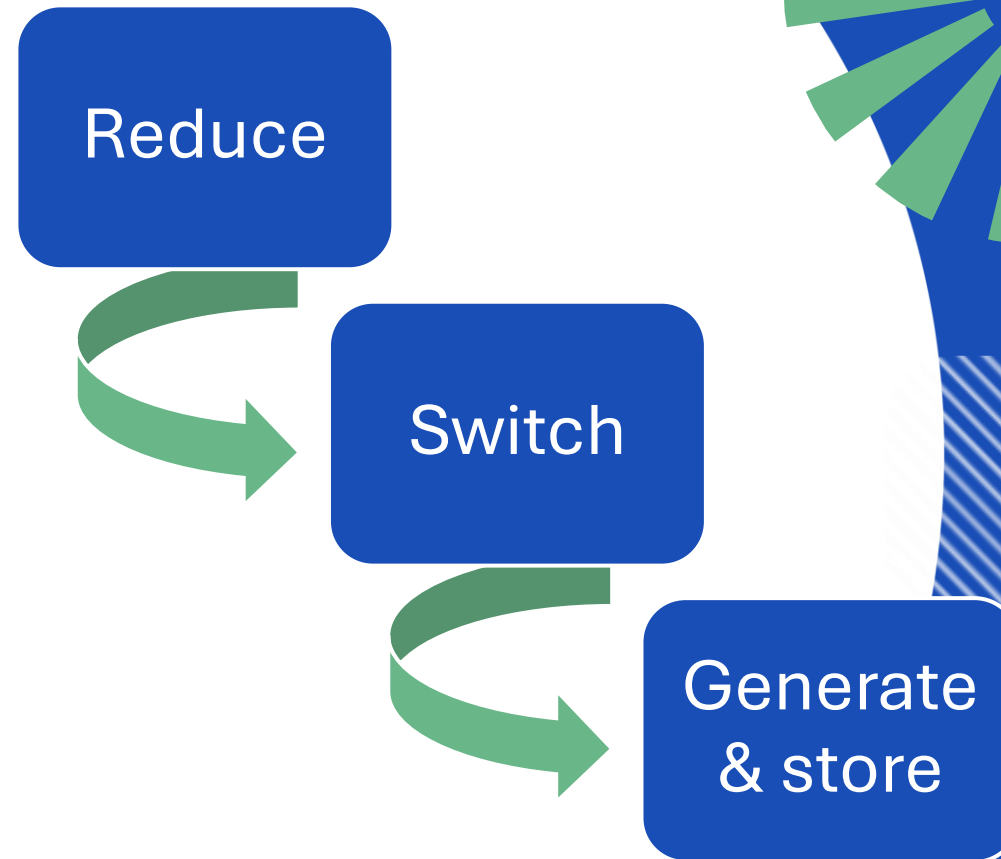
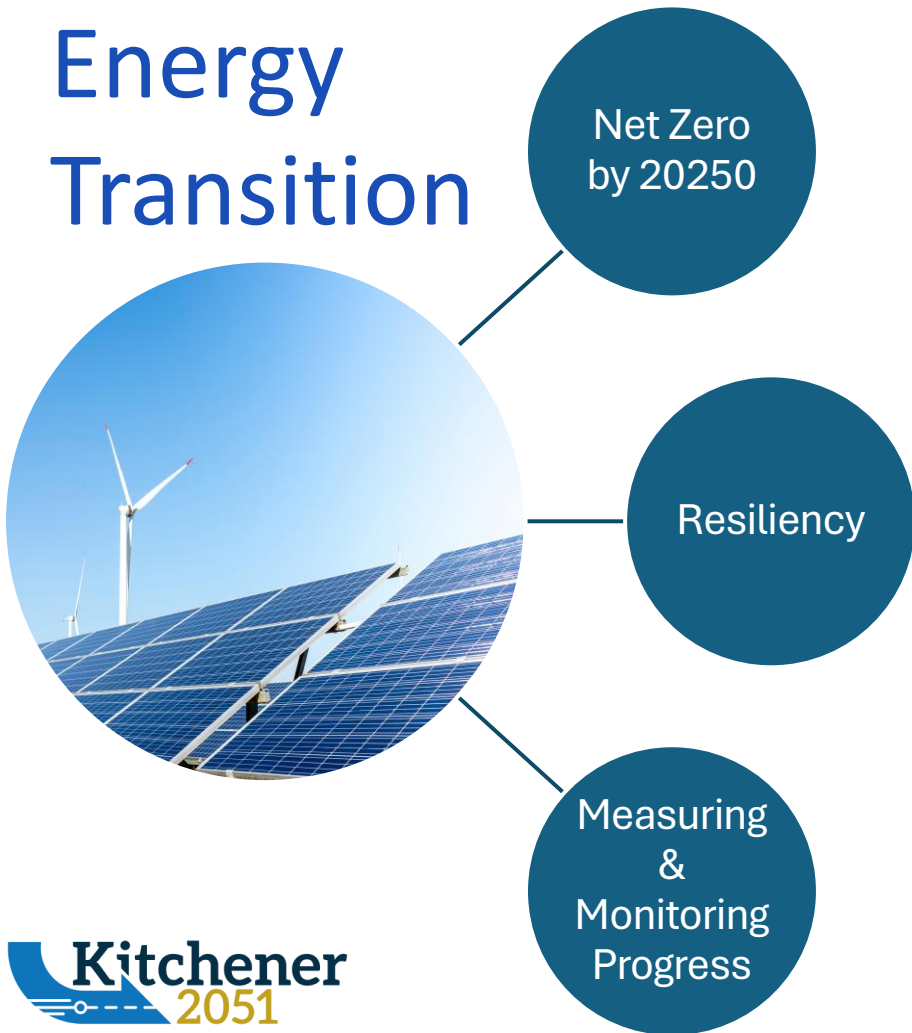
Private Development

- Transportation Impact Study
- Parking standards and pedestrian connections
- Prioritize pedestrian safety, accessibility, and convenience over private vehicles





Thriving Through the Energy Transition



Places to Protect

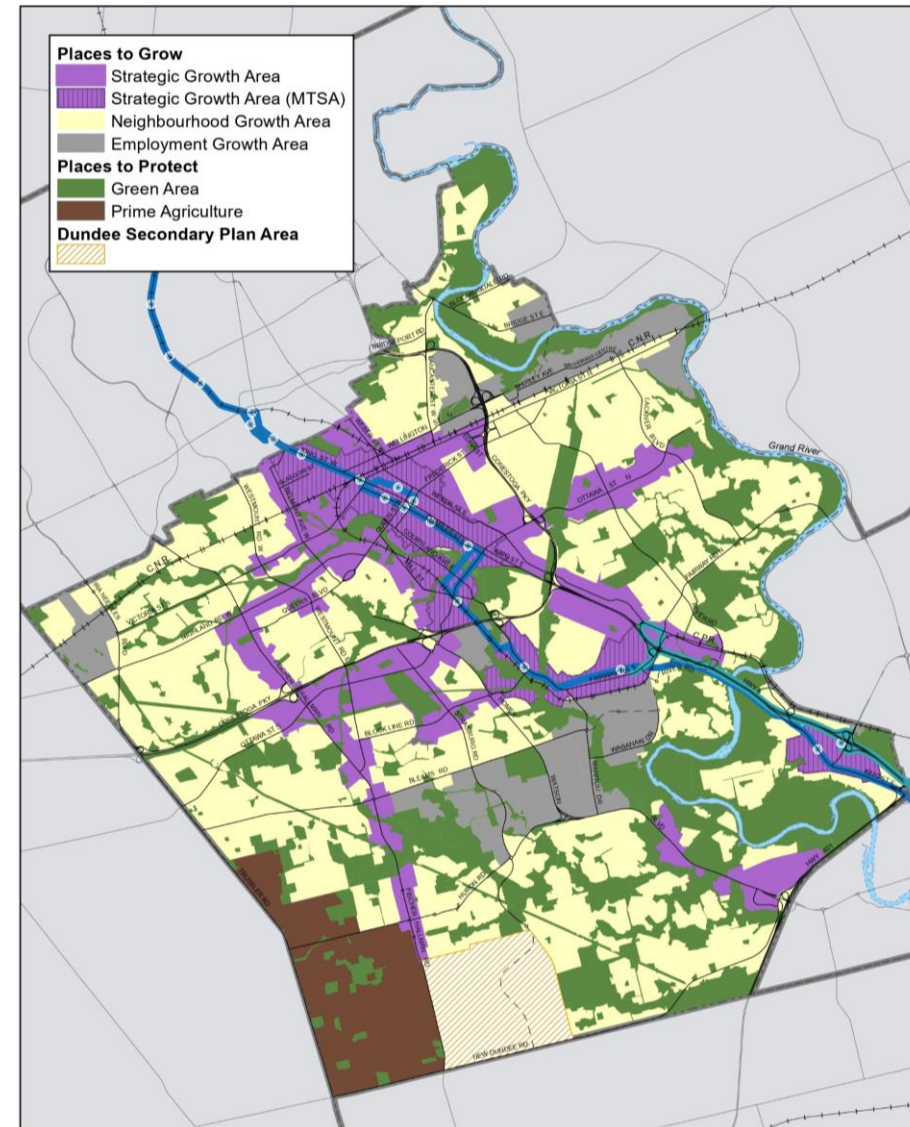
- Green Area
- Protected Countryside

Places to Grow

- Strategic Growth Area
- Neighbourhood Growth Area
- Industrial Growth Area

Places to Focus

- Downtown
- Urban Centres (Dundee; Block Line/Strasburg; Highland/Fischer Hallman; Ottawa/River)
- The Grand River





Mixed Use Land Use

- Broad range of residential and non-residential permissions
- Density regulated through a series of form-based regulations
- Protect existing commercial, retail, and services

Neighbourhood Land Use

- Broadly expand small scale non-residential opportunities that serve the immediate community
- Increased flexibility to deliver a range and mix of missing middle housing forms
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Commercial First Land Use

- Commercial retention and replacement required through redevelopment
- Provide flexibility and opportunities for all sizes of business
- Minimum commercial floor areas for new development

Auto-Oriented Commercial Land Use

- Essential component of Kitchener's economy
- Bulky goods and high impact uses that are incompatible with residential and compact complete communities
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Innovation Employment Land Use

- Applied mostly to areas that are currently designated industrial, but are not protected “areas of employment”
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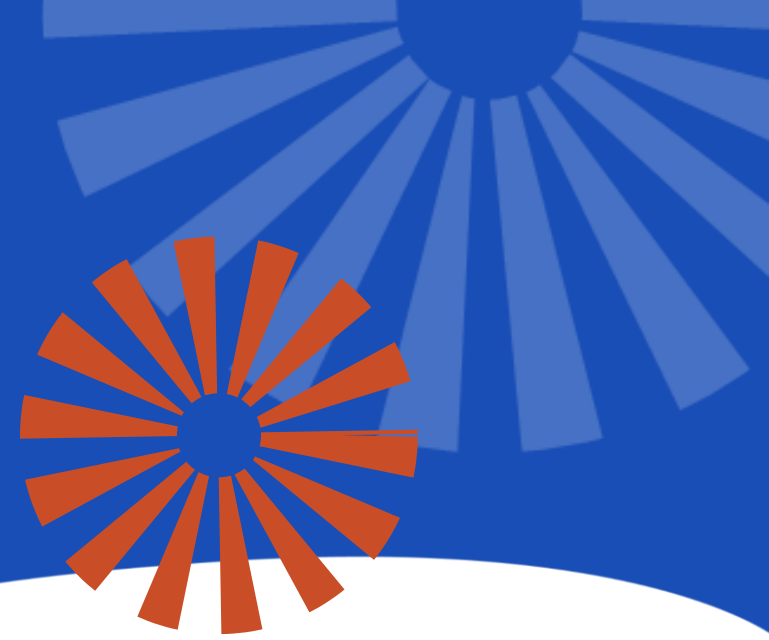


General Industrial and Heavy Industrial

- Manufacturing, Warehousing, R&D are permitted
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- Heavy Industrial allows noxious uses
- Buffer to residential

What's Staying the Same

- Growing Together (PMTSA planning framework)
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Natural Heritage System
- Drinking Water Source Protection Polices
- Prime Agriculture and the Countryside



let's talk!

Discussions

- Initial Reactions
- Does what you've heard resonate for you or the communities you represent?
- What are you most excited about?
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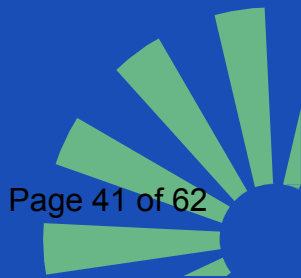
Next Steps

- Draft Plan comment period until December 12
- Speaker Series and Open House @ the Conrad Centre – December 3, 6-8:30pm
- Lived Expertise Work Group (Housing) – December 8, 3-5pm – KPL Main Branch
- Council adoption first half of 2026



Kitchener 2051 Official Plan Update

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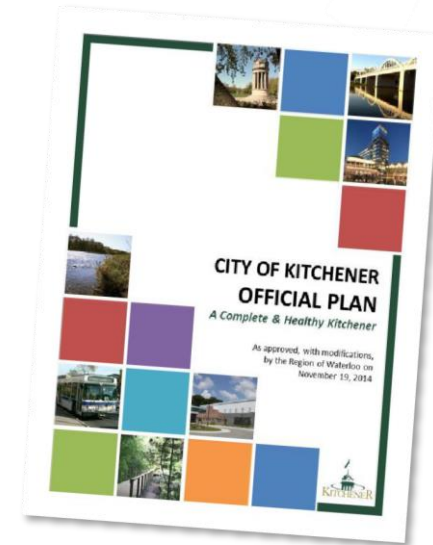
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Approach to Growth

How and where Kitchener will grow and change by 2051.



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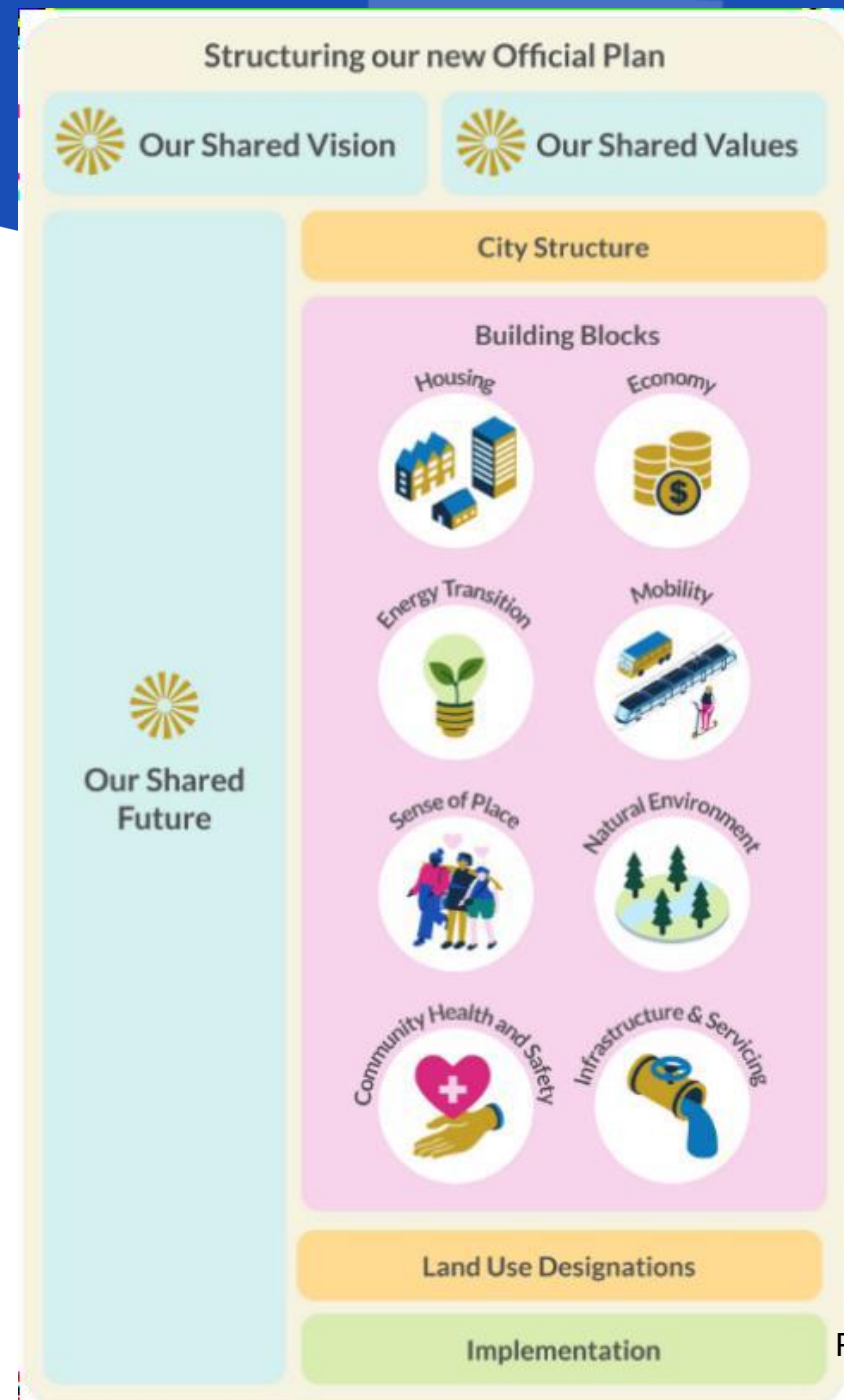
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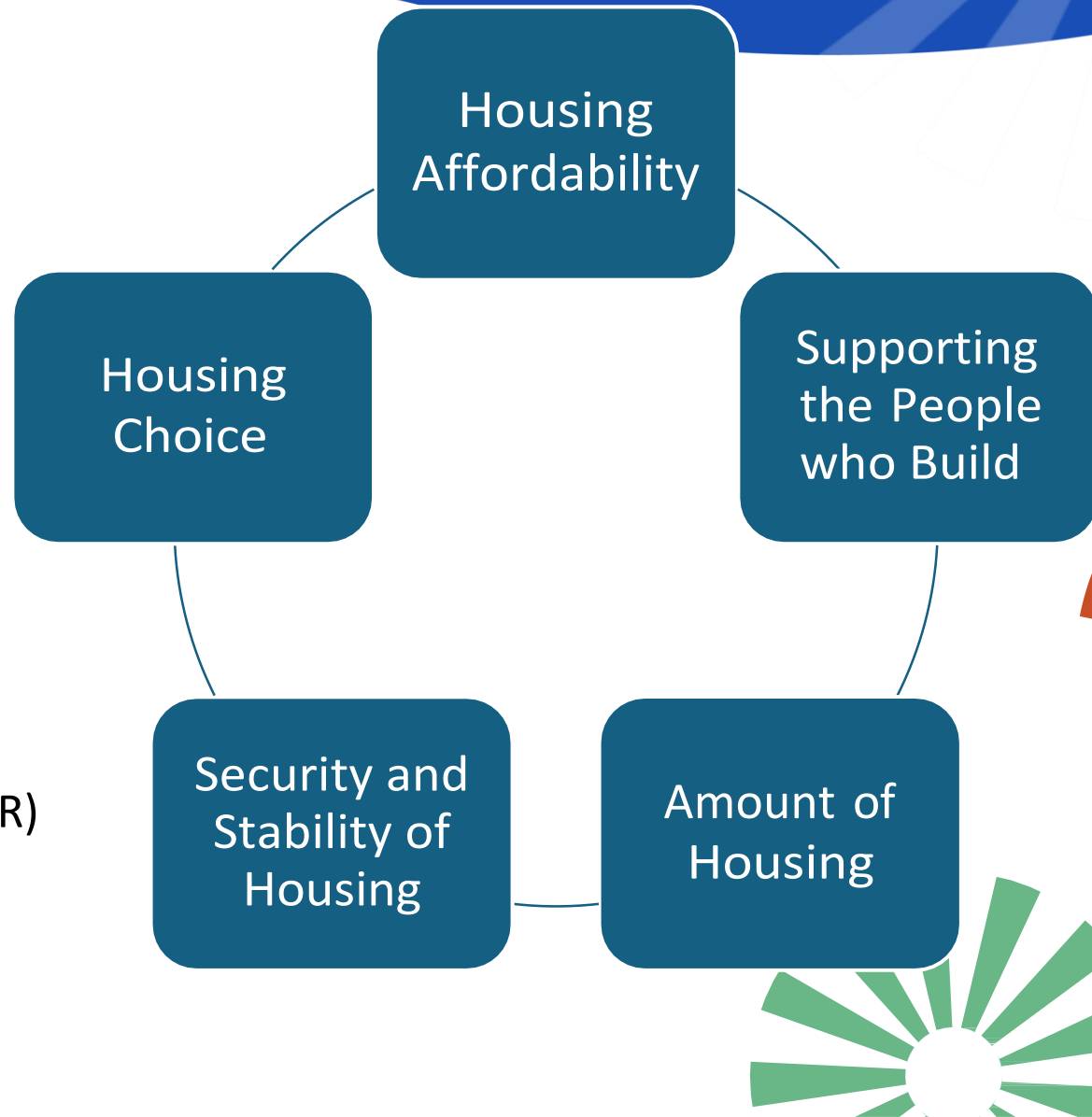
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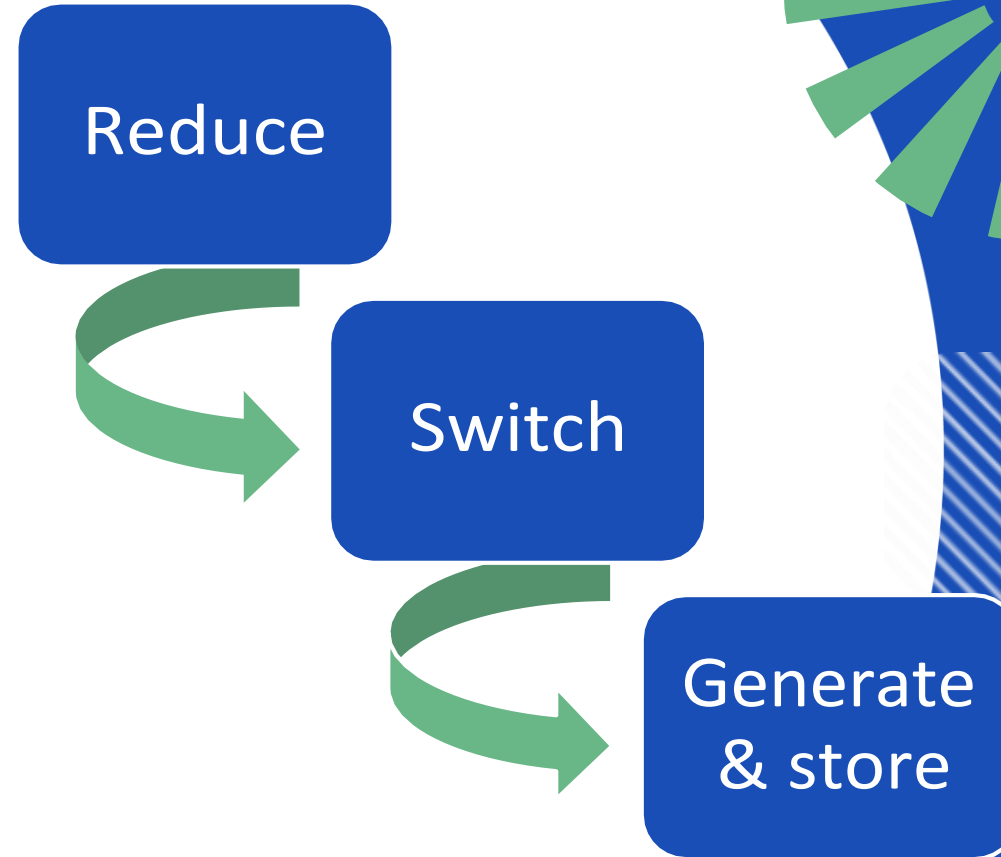
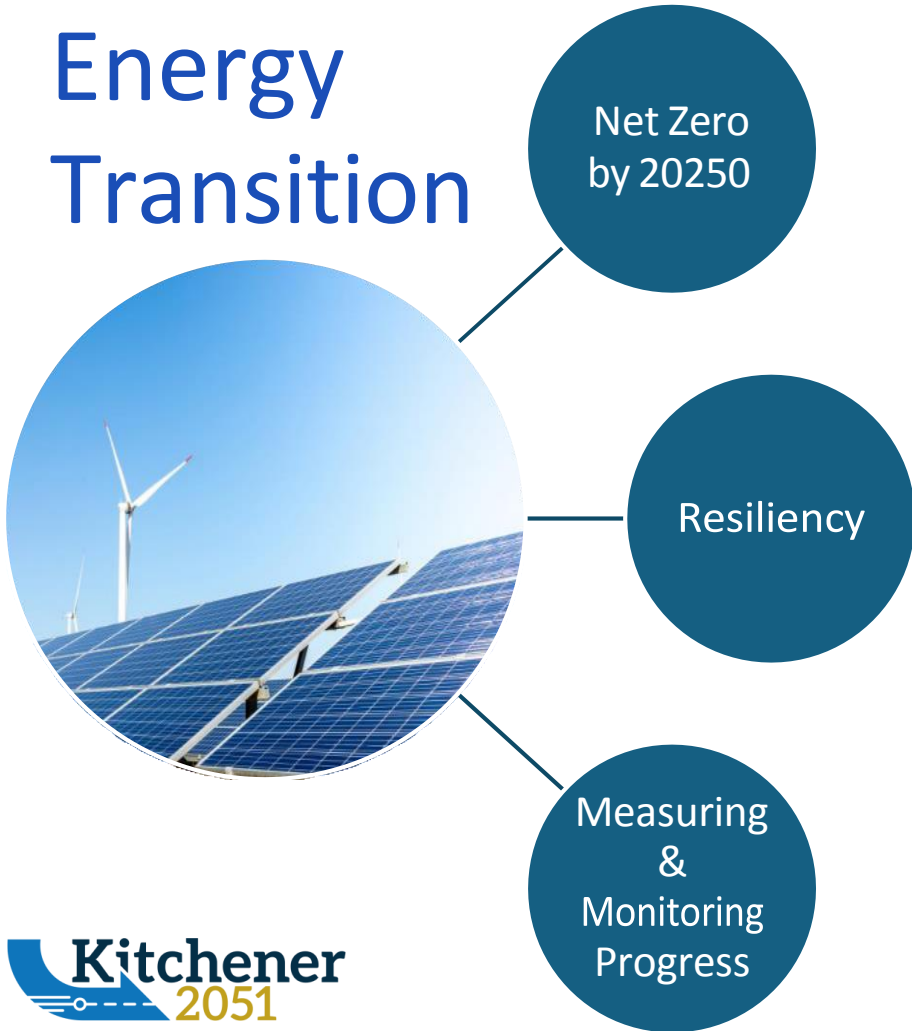
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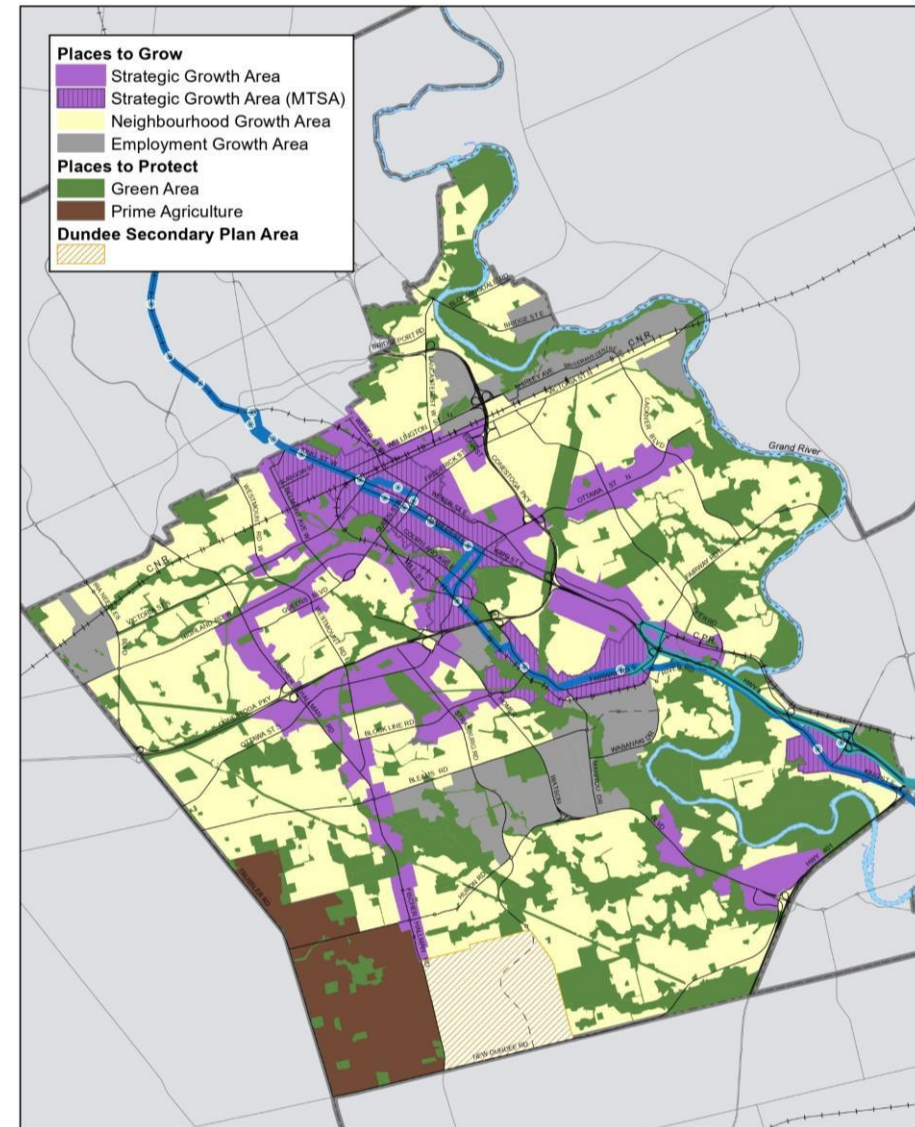
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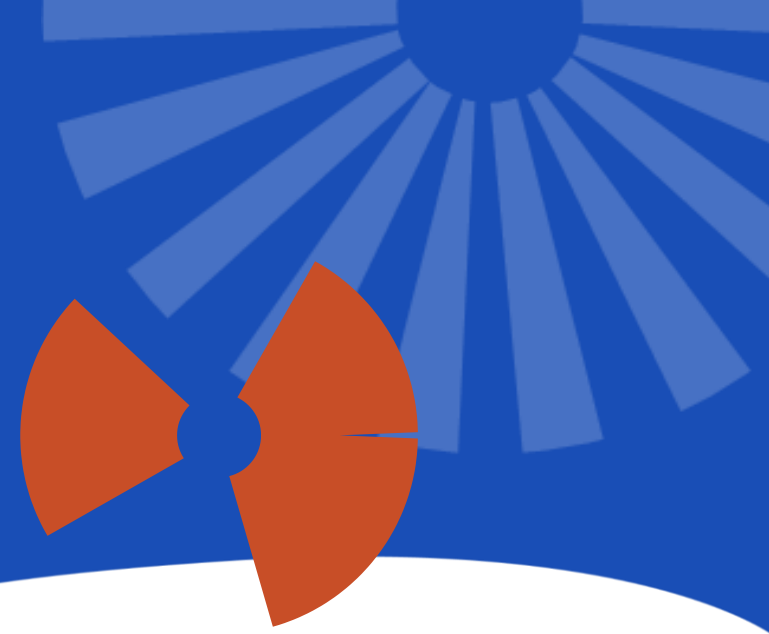
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- Draft Plan comment period until December 12
- Speaker Series and Open House @ the Conrad Centre – December 3, 6-8:30pm
- Lived Expertise Work Group (Housing) – December 8, 3-5pm – KPL Main Branch
- Council adoption first half of 2026

Date: November 19th, 2025
To: Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)
From: Lori Palubeski, Manager, Program & Resource Services
cc:
Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee – A communication that was shared October 30th, 2025

To ensure committee members have received this update, please see the following information that was shared with GRAAC members via email on October 30th, 2025:

Dear GRAAC Members,

Yesterday, our CAO shared with colleagues that the City of Kitchener will begin a new chapter in its accessibility work. As of September 2026, Kitchener will establish a city-specific Accessibility Advisory Committee.

For more than 20 years, GRAAC members have generously shared their lived experiences and expertise to help remove barriers and improve life for all residents. Your dedication has made Waterloo Region a more welcoming and inclusive place to call home, and we are deeply grateful for your contributions.

This decision reflects the spirit of engagement and the impact that has defined GRAAC's work. Through an environmental scan and meaningful conversations, we've recognized the need to evolve the committee's structure to better meet our accessibility priorities and legislative requirements.

What's Next

Kitchener staff will continue to support GRAAC for the remainder of this Council term, including:

- Preparing and posting agendas and meeting materials
- Managing meetings (attendance tracking, expense processing)
- Continuing all current administrative functions

In the interim, we've recommended the creation of a regional accessibility network—an approach successfully used in Waterloo Region for multi-jurisdictional collaborations such as the Children and Youth Planning Table and the Waterloo Region Reconciliation Action Partnership.

Thank You

On behalf of myself and the team at the City of Kitchener, thank you for your continued partnership, thoughtful contributions, and commitment to our shared goals. We look forward to future opportunities to connect and continue making meaningful change together.