

Kitchener

Already a leader in data use, Kitchener leveraged its CDA engagement to create a comprehensive Citywide Data Strategy that includes hiring its first Chief Data Officer and implementing an innovative, real-time Street Sweeper dashboard to improve city services.

Highlights

Launched a first-of-its-kind Street Sweeper Dashboard to provide operators reliable, real-time views into the status of various routes for sweeping to provide higher quality, more efficient service to residents.

Created its first Citywide Data Strategy, including budget allocations to improve data practices and hire the city's first Chief Data Officer.

Launched a process to create its 2024-2026 Strategic Plan that engages the community and uses an equity framework.

Background

In its baseline survey at the outset of the City Data Alliance, the Kitchener senior team reported being confident in its ability to use data in its daily work. The city had created the [Digital Kitchener Strategy](#) and the Innovation Lab, which brought digital solutions to solve the most pressing civic challenges. It had strong backgrounds in data management, specifically data privacy and security practices, open data (Kitchener [Open Data Portal](#)), and storytelling with data through [Data Maps](#). Kitchener's opportunities were in data governance, disaggregated demographic data collection and use, implementing a performance management model, and data workforce capacity building.

The mayor was a city IT staff member before becoming mayor, which allowed him to provide excellent insights into the power and possibilities of data, as well as ambitious ideas for how the city could improve its data practices. The team wanted to instill best practices to improve organizational engagement with data, including a more centralized view of key performance metrics and indicators, maximizing the use of data resources to more deeply understand performance, enabling data informed decision making, and assisting stakeholders in leveraging data. They also wanted to better understand data they currently had, identify patterns to generate new insights, and implement efficient processes to monitor and measure progress toward priorities and impact on the community.

Impact

The mayor's vision was to boldly and ambitiously champion the City Data Alliance work for the City of Kitchener to build foundational, organization-wide data practices to scale across the city, in order to deliver better services for

its residents. The mayor's priorities focused around (1) core services (e.g., snow removal, grass cutting), (2) meeting the needs of communities from an equity lens, (3) developing a data culture that welcomes data and enables the city to make better collective decisions.

Efforts to improve core services included the launch of a Street Sweeper Operator dashboard, which will improve service by providing operators a reliable, real-time view into the status of various routes for sweeping. The team is currently planning a pilot to test the dashboard with a select group of operators, and they will use the lessons learned from the pilot to make changes to the dashboard before rolling out with the entire team.

To meet the needs of communities, the city engaged the community to develop its 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, in which residents of Kitchener can inform the priorities that will be included.

In a key step toward creating a data-first culture, the city completed and approved its first Citywide Data Strategy, which includes an appropriate budget allocation to hire the city's first Chief Data Office and improve its data practices over the next three years.

