



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022 REPORT CARD #3

Projects Completed in 2023,
2019-2022 Plan Overall Reflections, and
Comments on 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

June 2024



Executive Summary

Compass Kitchener

Compass Kitchener consists of community volunteers and serves as an advisory committee appointed by and reporting to Kitchener City Council. It creates and leads Strategic Plan public engagement processes, determines community concerns, and identifies priorities for action. The Committee also monitors and evaluates progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan and achievement of the community vision and reports to Council on the outcome of this evaluation.

This Report Card

This report card is the third from Compass Kitchener evaluating completed Strategic Plan 2019-2022 projects. It focuses on:

- a cumulative summary of all the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 projects completed to date;
- detailed evaluation of the six most recently completed strategic plan projects and related notes for the future; and
- the Committee's overall observations on development and implementation of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and related notes for the future; and
- comments related to the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and its development.

Previous Strategic Plan 2019-2022 Report Cards

In December 2021, Compass Kitchener presented to Council its first 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Evaluation report sharing the Committee's detailed evaluation of the 12 strategic plan projects that had been completed by that date. Six of the 12 projects exceeded expectations and the balance met expectations.

In May 2023, Compass Kitchener presented another report to Council sharing the Committee's evaluation of five more strategic plan projects which were completed in 2023. Of the five projects evaluated in 2023, two exceeded expectations, one met expectations, and two did not meet expectations.

2023 Project Evaluation Findings

- This report card reviews six completed projects/sub-projects from the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. Five were completed in 2023 and one was completed in 2022 (not evaluated in 2022 report card).
- Two projects exceeded expectations, three projects met expectations, and Compass Kitchener's usual evaluation framework was not applied to one project as it evolved differently than initially envisioned.
- Eight projects/sub-projects remain incomplete: six are targeted for completion in 2024, one in 2025, and one is ongoing.

2019-2022 Strategic Plan Projects						
			Overall Evaluation of Completed Projects			Expected Completion
GOAL	PROJECT	Sub-Projects Separated Out	Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	
People Friendly Transportation	Complete Streets			✓		
	Bikeshare Program		✓			
	Protected Cycling Network					2024
	Cycling and Trails Materplan - connectivity and winter maintenance		✓			
	Pedestrian First Streets			✓		
Environmental Leadership	Corporate Climate Action Plan		✓			
	Energy Efficiency Reserve Fund			✓		
	Community Climate Action Plan			✓		
	Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy - tree canopy + tree planting		✓			
	Waste Diversion Strategy				✓	
Vibrant Economy	Urban Design Manual			✓		
	Incubator and Accelerator Network					2024
	Make it Kitchener 2.0 Strategy		✓			
	City Property Review + Property to Market	City Property Review				2024
		Property to Market				Ongoing
	Develop a Vision for Downtown, Innovation District (Bramm Yard) Master Plan and Civic District Master Plans	Downtown Vision	✓			
		Innovation District (Bramm Yards) Master Plan				2024
		Civic District Master Plan	N/A			
Caring Community	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy		✓			
	Affordable Housing Strategy		✓			
	Reduce Social Stigmas			✓		
	Open Space Strategy + Equitable Facility Distribution	Mill Courtland Community Centre Business Case		✓		
		Rosenberg Community Centre Expansion Business Case				2025
		Complete Huron Brigadoon Community Centre	✓			
		Open Space Strategy				2024
Arts and Culture Plan					2024	
Great Customer Service	Multi-language Interpretation Support			✓		
	Customer Satisfaction Program			✓		
	Online Customer Service Portal		✓			
	Set and Communicate Service Levels				✓	
	Customer Experience Program			✓		
TOTAL		8	10	10	2	
	LEGEND					
	Grey Background	Projects/Sub Projects still to be completed				
	Dotted border	Projects evaluated in this report				

Overall Observations and Looking Ahead

Compass Kitchener commends the City on the impressive advancement of its 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, despite major disruptions caused by the pandemic. Twenty-three Strategic Plan projects have been completed to date, ten of which Compass Kitchener found exceeded expectations, ten met expectations, two did not meet expectations, and one was reviewed outside the typical evaluation framework. Compass Kitchener highlights the exceptional success achieved on:

- the Bikeshare Program;
- the Cycling and Trails Master Plan and 3 km increase in trails with year-round access;
- the Corporate Climate Action Plan;
- the Urban Forest Strategy + Tree Canopy;
- the Make it Kitchener 2.0 Strategy;
- the Downtown Vision;
- the Corporate Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy;
- the Affordable Housing Strategy;
- the Huron Community Centre; and
- the Online Customer Service Portal.

The Committee provides a number of observations and suggestions based on its review of projects/sub-projects in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan and its look ahead to the new 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. The main topics addressed are:

- Post-COVID Ramp-Up;
- Housing Affordability;
- Customer Service;
- Delayed/Deferred Projects;
- Arts and Culture Master Plan;
- Project Budgets and Financial Data; and
- The 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

In Closing

Compass Kitchener commends the City on:

- the 23 2019-2022 Strategic Plan projects/sub-projects that have been completed;
- the overall quality of the work done;
- the continuing work on projects that remains;
- the continued evolution and growing effectiveness of public consultation processes; and
- the successful ramping up of the City's activities, programs, and operations post-pandemic, returning them to full capacity.

As the City's focus shifts from the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to implementation of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, we encourage the City to focus on three guiding themes that Compass Kitchener has identified as being of key importance moving forward with this plan:

1. FOCUS ON STRATEGIC INDICATORS AND PRIORITIZE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Compass Kitchener commends the City on the attention being given to the outcomes desired within each goal area and encourages continued focus on refining, the strategic indicators associated with each of the five goal areas in the strategic plan. Use the chosen strategic indicators to refine and prioritize data collection and analysis in order to provide Staff and Council with the best possible information on which to base decisions.

2. BE PROACTIVE, PRIORITY-DRIVEN, AND ADAPTIVE

Given the pressing issues our community faces and the rate of change in the environment in which it operates, be proactive, priority-driven, and adaptive:

- keep abreast of shifting priorities through public engagement;
- review and reassess priorities based on new developments and public input; and
- proactively adapt to change.

The new, more adaptive, strategic plan provides a platform that enables proactive and nimble responsiveness to change.

3. ADDRESS THE GROWING CRISIS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Compass Kitchener strongly urges Council to recognize the urgent need for action on the pressing issue of social isolation and loneliness within our community. Kitchener, like so many communities across Canada, grapples with an epidemic of loneliness that adversely affects the wellbeing of its residents. Research shows that social isolation and loneliness have profound negative impacts on physical and mental health, leading to increased risk of chronic diseases, depression, and even premature mortality. By declaring social isolation and loneliness an epidemic, the City of Kitchener has the opportunity to lead the nation as the first municipality in Canada to acknowledge and address this critical public health issue. Such a declaration would not only raise critical awareness, but also pave the way for innovative solutions and collaborative efforts to foster a more connected and supportive community in line with the aspirations of our newest strategic plan. At a time when recognition of this crisis remains lacking at the Provincial and Federal levels, the City of Kitchener can seize this opportunity to set a precedent and inspire other municipalities to follow suit, thereby catalyzing a nationwide movement toward combating loneliness, promoting social cohesion, and creating the conditions for a greater sense of belonging.

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Compass Kitchener

This report has been prepared by the following members of the Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee:

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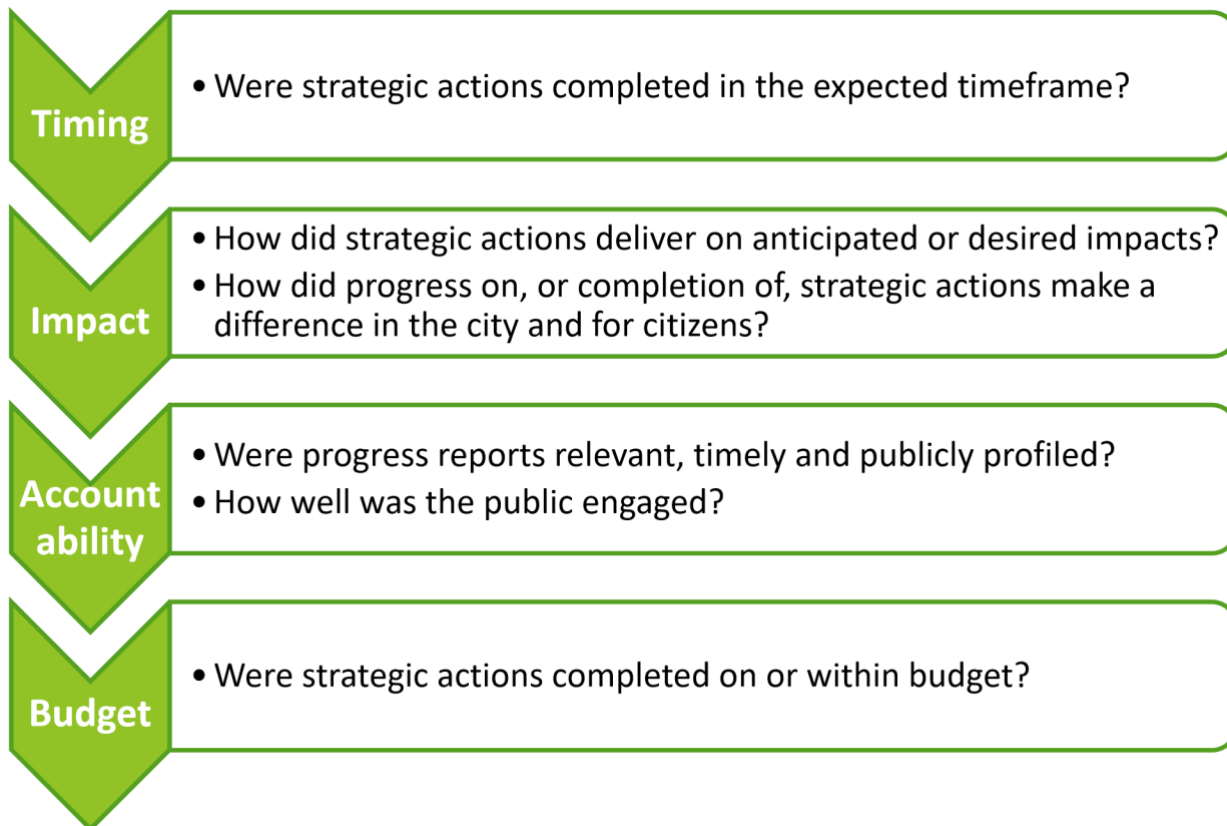
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Evaluation Approach

Compass Kitchener approached this evaluation as interested community members and considered timing, impact, accountability, and budget criteria in its assessment. Compass Kitchener considered evaluation criteria for the strategic actions developed in consultation with Kitchener's Corporate Leadership Team. The following questions guided the evaluation:



Evaluation Rating

After completing the evaluation process Compass Kitchener rated completed actions as:

- Exceeds Expectations;
- Meets Expectations; or
- Does Not Meet Expectations.

The following chart explains the classification for the three rating categories:


		
<p>Exceeds Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set and met challenging Objectives and showed initiative in meeting them - Proactively planned, problem solved and initiated solutions - Stepped outside of existing responsibilities to add value - Puts the public at centre of work - Identifies breakthrough Concepts - Is regarded as a knowledgeable resource - Exhibits mastery - Impacts exceed specified criteria - Elevates strategic plan - Is an exceptional contributor to strategic plan success 	<p>Meets Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Models values of caring, innovation, and vibrancy - Achieves specified criteria - Meets the City's high-performance reputation - Contributes positively to the success of the City 	<p>Does Not Meet Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late delivery of deliverables without explanation or valid reasons - Poor quality of deliverables (lack of clarity) - Poor quantity of deliverables - Non-delivery of deliverables

2023 Project Evaluations

PEOPLE-FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION

Transform how people move through the city by making the transportation network safe, convenient, comfortable, and connected.

Bikeshare Program

Bikeshare Program Report Card	
Strategic Goal Action: Encourage and incentivize alternative modes of transportation by developing and subsidizing a bikeshare program by 2021.	
Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria More people are using bikes and for a wider variety of trips, number of rentals, people, bikes, and bike parking facilities.	
Overall Evaluation: Exceeds Expectations 	
Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new e-scooter and e-bike share program began on April 14, 2023, throughout the Waterloo Region. • It became a regional initiative in which the city participated, though the city did have significant input into the selection of the provider • Revenue neutral initiative that encourages micro-mobility and mitigates carbon output (i.e. saved 12 tonnes of carbon emissions). • High uptake among the public, including covering over 190,000 rides, totally over 360,000 km travelled. • According to Neuron, the provider, the initiative injected \$8.2 million into the region's economy. 	
Notes for the Future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to educate public on proper usage to decrease the potential for injury. • Expand the service area in which e-bikes and e-scooters can be accessed and used. • Collect separate information about usage of e-bikes and e-scooters • Consider a public awareness campaign to promote greater etiquette in using and parking e-bikes and e-scooters. 	

Pedestrian-First Streets

Pedestrian-First Streets Report Card	
Strategic Goal Action: Develop a plan to create pedestrian-first streets between Victoria Park and City Hall and between the ION and Kitchener Market by 2022.	
Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria Number of connected adjacent neighbourhoods (of the total) by a continuous link.	
Overall Evaluation: Meets Expectations 	
Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pedestrianization of the Gaukel Block was completed in June 2023; with only one item left to finish, the pedestrianization of the Market District will be completed in June 2024. • The Gaukel Block activation was supported by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. • The Market District Activation includes mid-week markets and concerts, urban agriculture, programming, and seating. • Both activations serve as welcome community hubs for local programming. 	
Notes for the Future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing community programming will be important to ensure an engaging community space for the public. • Continue seeking public input regarding programming and space use. • Consider other areas of the downtown and wider city in which to pedestrianize streets. 	


VIBRANT ECONOMY

Build a vibrant city by making investments to support job creation, economic prosperity, thriving arts and culture and great places to live.

Civic District Master Plan

Civic District Master Plan Report Card
<p>Strategic Goal Action: Finalize the Civic District Master Plan (CDMP) by 2022. As the CDMP received approval by Council in 2009, the intent was to review and update it.</p>
<p>Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria Number and nature of opportunities realized and broad public support for the plan.</p>
<p>Overall Evaluation: N/A</p> <p>City Staff's review of the CDMP determined the plan, which was written with a long-term lens, remains relevant with no need for updating. Work on Growing Together, developing the planning framework for Kitchener's Major Transit Station Areas, incorporated changes in support of the goals of the CDMP. As review and revision of the CDMP evolved differently than originally planned, the usual evaluation framework was not applied to this project.</p>
Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importantly, staff reaffirmed the relevance of the CDMP, thereby underscoring its importance as a focus for arts and culture. Growing Together introduced changes supporting inclusion of an educational institution, residential uses, and public/private partnerships, which will facilitate development in the Civic District. Building elements supportive of the CDMP into Growing Together reflects an effective use of City resources and ensured inter-related projects are not siloed, but are considered together.
Notes for the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the text in the plan to make it a more current, living document. Make the CDMP more readily available on the City's website. Focus on ways to enhance animated connections between the Civic District and Downtown Kitchener.


Downtown Vision

Downtown Vision Report Card	
Strategic Goal Action: Develop a vision for downtown Kitchener and continue to position downtown Kitchener as a leading destination for redevelopment opportunities.	
Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria This project involved development of a Downtown Vision. Therefore, no specific impact criteria were developed.	
Overall Evaluation: Exceeds Expectations 	
Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the vision and guiding principles was based on an exceptional public engagement process through which the public provided input in numerous ways. The results reflect an impressive level of public participation and input. • The vision and three principles outlined are clear and well-developed. 	
Notes for the Future	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the City's Downtown Kitchener Vision project page (https://www.kitchener.ca/en/strategic-plans-and-projects/downtown-kitchener-vision.aspx) and the Downtown Strategy page (https://www.kitchener.ca/en/business-in-kitchener/downtown-kitchener-strategy.aspx) to reflect the completion and approval of the new vision and guiding principles. • Follow through with the vision and guiding principles to impact the downtown. 	

CARING COMMUNITY

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.


Mill Courtland Community Centre Expansion Business Case

Mill Courtland Community Centre Expansion Business Case Report Card
Strategic Goal Action: Complete a needs assessment and business case to determine the requirements for an addition to the Mill Courtland Community Centre.
Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria Was the project started on time?
Overall Evaluation: Meets Expectations 
Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive consultation process with the community and users of the centre. • Proposed design elements address many community needs, including accessibility and language considerations, incorporating Indigenous design with sustainability initiatives. • Overall, the business case is well-researched and the recommendations demonstrate innovation, inclusion, and diversity.
Notes for the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated cost of proposal is approximately \$1.5 million over budget, so prioritize critical components in the detailed design phase. • Use this business case consultation process as a model for future recreation centre builds/expansions, especially its use of partnerships to offer meaningful programming and a community hub for the neighbourhoods it serves.

GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Increase people's satisfaction, trust and engagement with the City by providing friendly, easy and convenient services.

Customer experience review program

Customer Experience Review Report Card
Strategic Goal Action: Implement a comprehensive Customer Experience Review Program to help ensure services are easy and convenient to access from the customer's perspective by 2022.
Compass Kitchener's Specific Community Impact Criteria Results/improvements are made public and % improvement (i.e. shift from negative to positive feedback) over time is included in reporting.
Overall Evaluation: Meets Expectations 
Highlights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data gathered through the Customer Satisfaction Program led staff to identify three customer service areas in need of attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MyUtilities widget in MyKitchener Accessing Revenue/Kitchener Utilities by phone ActiveNet program used in community centres 17 recommendations to improve service have been implemented and 19 are in progress. Several of the improvements in progress will be accomplished upon implementation of the new MyUtilities widget and the new telephone system. In this active problem-solving project, staff were efficient in their use of time and city resources and avoided redundancies. The City's innovative custom MyUtilities widget, developed with an outside vendor, led the vendor to develop a standard product template for use by other municipalities.
Notes for the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the full impact of recent improvements and those scheduled for the near future. Define a clear follow-up plan for collecting new customer satisfaction data to ensure transparency and accountability. The number of issues identified and solutions found and being implemented, indicates the value of this program and the benefit of its continuation.

Overall Observations and Looking Ahead

POST-COVID RAMP-UP

Compass Kitchener welcomes the City's successful return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, operation, and programming. It also appreciates the City's development of a policy framework to guide hybrid work where appropriate.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability remains a key concern. While municipalities are not responsible for building housing, there are numerous ways in which they can actively help resolve homelessness and the housing affordability crisis affecting residents across the full housing spectrum (e.g. provision of land for shelters or supportive housing, zoning, inclusionary zoning policies, etc.) Compass Kitchener encourages the City to continue to make every possible effort to actively participate in developing innovative, practical solutions to this crisis, focusing its efforts specifically on those areas in which the City can be impactful.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Given that the 2019-2022 Strategic plan put significant emphasis on improvements to customer service, Compass Kitchener welcomes the innovative new Customer Service Centre located on the main floor of City Hall. It provides an accessible and efficient interface for community members to connect with knowledgeable staff regarding the broad range of services provided by the City.

DELAYED/DEFERRED PROJECTS

Eight projects or sub-projects from the 2019-2022 plan remain incomplete. Compass Kitchener looks forward to receiving updates on their progress to enable their evaluation upon completion.

ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN

Compass Kitchener recognizes artists and arts and cultural organizations remain particularly vulnerable in this post-pandemic period. This vulnerability arises for three reasons:

- continued disruption of audience attendance patterns;
- insufficient public and private funding of the arts arising from competing demands for support; and
- inflationary pressures.

Given the enormous social, economic, and community-building value of arts and culture, Compass Kitchener encourages the City to proceed with developing its Arts and Culture Master Plan. Through it, the City can craft strategies to help strengthen and sustain this sector at this critical inflection point. A strong and innovative Arts and Culture Master Plan will both bolster the vibrancy, livability, and wellbeing of our community and help retain healthy levels of employment in this important sector.

PROJECT BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL DATA

Given public interest in financial accountability, Compass Kitchener has always intended to review actual project expenses in relation to approved budgets. However, this information has generally been unavailable. Accordingly, we encourage the City to share this information, where available, to inform our evaluation process.

Development & Implementation of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

In 2023, Compass Kitchener planned and facilitated public engagement activities to assist with the development of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. Accordingly, it seems appropriate for Compass Kitchener to comment on the new strategic plan and its development in this report card. Overall, Compass Kitchener fully supports the new strategic plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

We applaud the level of public engagement invested in the development of the new plan, especially the inclusion of the Resident Panel. Resident Panel members responded positively to being involved in the process and felt their participation had a real impact on and added value to the development of the strategic plan.

The Resident Panel represented an excellent example of meaningful public engagement and was of particular interest to Compass Kitchener as an innovative new form of public engagement in the City's strategic planning process. Compass Kitchener welcomes the improvements to the City's public engagement activities that were key to many of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan projects.

Given the value of effective public engagement and the increasing number of City staff called upon to design and carry out public engagement processes, Compass Kitchener wants to highlight the importance of ensuring that all staff leading these projects have access to the facilitation/public engagement training needed to support them in generating the most positive and effective outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Numerous strategies to advance sustainability, the impacts of which directly affect life in Kitchener and beyond, received thoughtful consideration in the development of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. The City deserves praise for its continued efforts to integrate and localize many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in its strategic plan. We encourage the City to continue its efforts to proactively forecast, mitigate, and adapt to the inevitable and growing effects of climate change.

FOCUS ON OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIZE DATA COLLECTION

Compass Kitchener supports the City's efforts to identify and measure outcomes for each of the five goal areas in its new strategic plan. The work undertaken to identify strategic indicators underpins the framework for effective evaluation. It will guide efforts to fine-tune and prioritize data collection and ensure that the best and most relevant data are available to staff and Council when making important decisions.

A MORE ADAPTIVE PLAN

Compass Kitchener supports Council and Staff's decision to develop a more adaptive plan that identifies five goal areas and prioritized projects for focus in the first couple of years, while still outlining the projects of focus over the balance of the four-year term. In the past, the City planned more projects (sometimes substantially more) than could be accomplished over the term of the plan, sometimes as a result of unforeseen circumstances (e.g. the COVID-19 crisis). Compass Kitchener believes the City's new adaptive approach will:

- strengthen the City's ability to adapt and reprioritize in the face of unexpected changes;
- support division of large projects into stages, the impact of which can be assessed along the way; and
- aid in planning projects that are ambitious while still realistic in number and scale.

To maintain momentum over the four years of the plan, Compass Kitchener encourages the City to set clear timelines for the projects initially outlined, as well as those subsequently added to the plan. A more adaptive plan calls for regular and clear communication with the public about progress on and adjustments to individual projects, while also informing the public about new projects as they begin.

TRACKING AND SHARING STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE

In previous years, Compass Kitchener encouraged the City to add a feature to its website that reports progress on implementation of the strategic plan. Accordingly, we are pleased to see this recommendation adopted. Our committee sincerely hopes that progress on projects in the new strategic plan will be similarly documented on the City's website to keep the public informed about the City's work and accomplishments.

In Closing

Compass Kitchener commends the City on:

- the 23 completed projects from the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan;
- the overall quality of the work done;
- the continuing work on projects that remains;
- the continued evolution and growing effectiveness of public consultation processes; and
- the successful ramping up of the City's activities, programs, and operations post-pandemic, returning them to full capacity.

As the City's focus shifts from the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to implementation of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, Compass Kitchener suggests three recommendations as the City moves forward:

1. FOCUS ON THE INDICATORS OF SUCCESS AND PRIORITIZ DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

It will be key to:

- maintain focus on, and continue to refine, the key indicators of success associated with each of the five goal areas in the strategic plan; and
- use that focus to refine and adjust priorities for data collection and analysis to provide Staff and Council with the best possible information on which to base decisions.

2. BE PROACTIVE, PRIORITY-DRIVEN AND ADAPTIVE

Given the pressing issues faced in our community, and the rate of change in the environment in which it operates, be proactive, priority-driven, and adaptive:

- keep abreast of shifting priorities through public engagement
- review and reassess priorities based on new developments and public input; and
- proactively adapt to change.

The new, more adaptive, strategic plan provides a platform that supports responding nimbly and proactively to change.

3. ADDRESS THE GROWING CRISIS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Compass Kitchener strongly urges Council to recognize the urgent need for action on the pressing issue of social isolation and loneliness within our community. Kitchener, like so many communities across Canada, grapples with an epidemic of loneliness that adversely affects the wellbeing of its residents. Research shows that social isolation and loneliness have profound negative impacts on physical and mental health, leading to increased risk of chronic diseases, depression, and even premature mortality. By declaring social isolation and loneliness an epidemic, the City of Kitchener has the opportunity to lead the nation as the first municipality in Canada to acknowledge and address this critical public health issue. Such a declaration would not only raise critical awareness, but also pave the way for innovative solutions and collaborative efforts to foster a more connected and supportive community in line with the aspirations of our newest strategic plan. At a time when recognition of this crisis remains lacking at the Provincial and Federal levels, the City of Kitchener can seize this opportunity to set a precedent and inspire other municipalities to follow suit, thereby catalyzing a nationwide movement toward combating loneliness, promoting social cohesion, and creating the conditions for a greater sense of belonging.