

Staff Report

Chief Administrator's Office

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REPORT TO: Special Council

DATE OF MEETING: May 9, 2022

SUBMITTED BY: Kathryn Dever, Director, Strategy and Corporate Performance
519-741-2200 ext. 7370

PREPARED BY: Kathryn Dever, Director, Strategy and Corporate Performance
519-741-2200 ext. 7370

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All

DATE OF REPORT: May 3, 2022

REPORT NO.: CAO-2022-198

SUBJECT: Results of Environics 2022 Survey of Kitchener Residents

RECOMMENDATION:

For discussion

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to communicate the results of the Environics 2022 Survey of Kitchener residents.
- At the Council strategy session **Council's feedback on what is important to learn more about from citizens through the next engagement phases** will be sought.
- Community engagement included posting this report to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council meeting. The survey results will be used to inform public engagement to identify community priorities and cast a new community vision through a meaningful and inclusive public engagement process.
- This report supports the creation of a new strategic plan that builds on the success of the existing strategic and goes further with a new 20-year vision for the City of Kitchener
- There are no financial implications associated with this staff report.

BACKGROUND:

The City's Strategic Plan sets priorities and a plan for action that guides progress over the four-year term of Council towards our long-term community vision of building an innovative, caring and vibrant Kitchener. The current 2019-2022 Strategic Plan has driven progress toward tangible achievements and results, while providing context for the annual Business

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Plan, and decision-making on capital and operating budget investments. Importantly, the Strategic Plan represents a commitment to the public to move forward on those things that are most important to them. The next term of Council beginning in 2023 represents an opportunity to set a new agenda for the next four years that builds on the progress made, while planning for the future to take advantage of new opportunities to serve the community better, and respond to any emerging issues or shifts in citizen priorities.

A new aspect of the planning process beyond the four-year planning horizon, will be engaging with the community to cast a new long-term vision to refresh the current vision which was established in 2000. The updated vision will go beyond an aspirational statement, and instead include measurable targets for the City to plan for over multiple strategic plans, in an effort to wholistically tackle the complex issues our community faces. The community engagement for this visioning process will be a key element that Compass Kitchener and staff will collaborate on in the coming months. Community engagement has always been an important part of the strategic planning process, and uniquely entrenched in the Compass Kitchener advisory committee mandate.

REPORT:

Compass Kitchener Responsibilities

The Compass Kitchener citizen advisory committee has a significant role with respect to public engagement processes tied to the strategic plan. In particular, the committee is responsible for:

- Designing and implementing public engagement processes in collaboration with staff to validate the community's vision and major strategic priorities and recommending community priorities before each municipal election.
- Reporting to Council on community priorities to assist in the establishment of, and updating of, Council's four-year Strategic Plan and annual Business Plans.
- Developing evaluation criteria in collaboration with staff reflective of the community's priorities and monitoring the City's performance against goals included in the Strategic Plan for the City of Kitchener.
- Reporting on performance to Council and the Community on an annual basis.
- Ensuring communication and collaboration among Advisory Committees of Council by convening two yearly meetings, one for Chairs and Vice Chairs and the second for the full membership of all Advisory Committees.
- Developing a yearly workplan and submitting it to Council for feedback.

Environics Survey Methodology

Environics Research was retained to: design a survey on municipal issues and priorities with the input of staff, Compass Kitchener and REFOCUS consulting; execute the survey

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with a statistically representative sample of Kitchener residents; and to report on the results. A telephone survey of 1,006 Kitchener residents aged 18 and older, was completed between March 18th and April 4th, 2022. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%, nineteen times out of twenty.

Residents in each of Kitchener's 10 wards were surveyed, as well as both landline and cellphone users. The sample for this survey matches the statistics Canada profile for the City of Kitchener on key demographic and lifestyle variables and the results can be considered representative of the general population. The results of the survey provide a current pulse on the community as well as important insights for the development of a strategic plan that will align with the views, opinions and concerns of residents.

Recognizing the importance to the City of better representing the full diversity of the community in gathering public opinion, the 2022 survey was designed with a different approach to data collection and lens on data analysis than previous surveys. Improvements made over previous surveys include more equity-focused questions, and expanded demographic questions to help understand opinions across categories including race and gender identity, which were not asked in previous surveys.

Highlights of Survey Results

- Satisfaction with the City of Kitchener government is high, and results have remained stable since the last community survey in 2018. Just under four in five residents are satisfied with their municipal government, and six in ten say the City is on the right track.
- Residents' perceptions of value for tax have declined since 2018, with 60% saying they receive good value (compared to 68% in 2018). 26% of residents favour a tax increase to improve services, and one-third would prefer service cuts over tax increases.
- When residents are asked unaided to name the single most important issue facing the City, 33% of residents reference housing affordability. This priority is also reflected when asked for the one thing the City can do to make Kitchener a better place - the most common response is to improve housing affordability, tied with better roads and transportation.
- To address housing and homelessness, over one-third of Kitchener residents think the City should focus on advocating with other levels of government to fund programs that will end homelessness, while a slightly smaller proportion say the City should work with other levels of government and organizations to secure funding for affordable housing options.
- On the topic of Sustainability, 59% of Kitchener residents agree that it is important to use more of the City's budget to address climate change.
- A majority of Kitchener residents want to see the City balance supports for existing businesses and the creation of new jobs.

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Next Steps:

Insights from the public survey and Compass Kitchener will be used to inform the next phase of engagement around the creation of a 20 year vision, and identify the community priorities that Compass Kitchener will present to council in September. A campaign to encourage resident involvement in a variety of engagement opportunities is planned. Digital and online options will be included, alongside focus groups and interviews with equity deserving groups and individuals. Engagement will shift from a consultative approach in the early stages of the strategic planning process, to a focus on relationship building and deeper opportunities to learn and plan WITH the community. The Strategic Plan engagement will also be informed and supported by the Equity and Antiracism Committee, and staff from the Equity, Antiracism and Indigenous Initiatives team with a strong desire to build and maintain ongoing relationships with equity deserving groups beyond the timeframe of the Strategic Planning cycle.

Key Community Engagement Activities:

- Launch multi-faceted communications campaign (May 2022)
- Launch online engagement Engage Kitchener page (May 2022)
- Pop-up and Event engagement (June 2022 - August 2022)
- Outreach to community groups (June 2022 - December 2022)
- Online public survey (EngageKitchener) on draft Strategic Goals and Actions (May 2023)

Discussion question for Council:

Based on the community survey results, what would you like to learn more about from citizens through the next phase of engagement?

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the development of the 2023-2026 City of Kitchener Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report has no impact on the Capital Budget or on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council/committee meeting.

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CONSULT – The public will be further consulted on the results of the Environics survey through the upcoming engagement phase.

COLLABORATE – Compass Kitchener is collaborating with staff to design and implement a public engagement program to engage residents and other stakeholders on the results of the survey to help identify community priorities and to inform the creation of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- CAO-2022-160 Preparing for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
- Council Policy GOV-BOA-077 (Compass Kitchener Terms of Reference)

APPROVED BY: Dan Chapman, CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Environics City of Kitchener Public Survey Report
- Attachment B - Environics Public Survey Presentation