



Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee Agenda

November 5, 2025, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Schmalz Room - Second Floor City Hall

City of Kitchener

200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7

People interested in participating in this meeting can email Committee Administrator, Allison Remillard at allison.remillard@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.

Chair: Troy Glover

Vice-Chair: James Young

Pages

1. Commencement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

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 in order to participate in the meeting. Delegation registration is permitted up to the start of the meeting.

4. Discussion Items

4.1 Completed Project Presentation - Downtown Energy District 30 m

Project Manager, Tim Donegani will provide a presentation on the Downtown Energy District project to members of Compass Kitchener.

4.2 Debrief and Review of Downtown Energy District Project Presentation 30 m

Members of Compass Kitchener will debrief on and evaluate the completed evaluation template for the Downtown Energy District project.

4.3 Review Presentation for All-Advisory Committee Meeting 25 m

Compass Kitchener members will review presentation and finalize.

4.4 Review Previous Minutes 5 m

Compass Kitchener members will review the minutes from the October 1st meeting.

5. Information Items

5.1 Compass Kitchener Project Evaluation - Downtown District Energy 1

5.2 Compass Kitchener Draft Presentation - Fall 2025 All Advisory Committee Meeting 7

6. Adjournment

Evaluation Framework for the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

Evaluation Process

In previous years, one of Compass Kitchener's primary challenges during the evaluation process was a lack of sufficient information to effectively assess projects. To address this, Compass Kitchener now sends standardized briefing templates to be completed by project managers for each finished project. The briefing template provided below asks staff to provide a brief summary (e.g., two- to three-sentences) of how the project has met each evaluation criterion, along with any supporting documents for additional information.

Compass Kitchener will review completed staff briefings as a first-step in their evaluation process. If Compass Kitchener has any outstanding questions, members will request short voluntary presentations by project staff.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Responsible Project Delivery:

This criterion focuses on how well project goals, budgets and timelines are managed. It emphasizes the importance of monitoring and tracking progress to ensure projects are completed efficiently and effectively, achieving goals within financial constraints and deadlines.

- Note: Given that the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan is intended to be adaptive, responsible project delivery also recognizes that timelines may shift due to shifting priorities and needs.

2. Impact/Public Value:

This criterion assesses how the impact of the project will be tracked and evaluated, and the extent to which a project (has the potential) to create positive outcomes for the community and contributes to the goal(s) of the Strategic Plan.

3. Transparency & Communication:

This criterion focuses on the dissemination of information through staff reports and other channels. It emphasizes the importance of relevant, clear, timely, and accessible communication to the community, ensuring that project goals, progress, challenges, and outcomes/impacts are openly shared.

4. Public Engagement:

This criterion evaluates how well a project involves the community and/or relevant parties in its planning and execution.

- Note: specific considerations will be built out for each criterion by the next CK cohort

Equity Lens

Using the definition of equity outlined in Kitchener's Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism policy, Compass Kitchener will also incorporate an equity lens to underpin the evaluation of all projects.

"An equity approach creates the conditions for fair and equal access and opportunity for everyone, by addressing discriminations, exclusions and barriers experienced by distinct groups. Equity is not the same as equality, nor is it the same as inequality."

Evaluation Rating

Compass Kitchener will evaluate each project using the following rating scale: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, and does not meet expectations.

The evaluation rating will be determined based on the extent to which all applicable evaluation criteria are met, recognizing that some criteria may not be applicable to each project. Each individual criterion will be assigned a rating, and based on the ratings of all applicable criteria, Compass Kitchener members will determine an overall rating through a consensus vote.

COMPASS KITCHENER STAFF EVALUATION

GOAL AREA: Cultivating a Green City Together

Project Name: Downtown District Energy

Project Name: District Energy Business Case Staff Report
Project Description: Complete a District Energy business case for the downtown area to explore clean energy opportunities to be a leader as a low-carbon city. <u>Background</u> District Energy (DE) involves heat and cold generated at a centralized plant that is circulated to customers through piped hot and cold-fluid distribution networks. It provides a flexible, future-ready, local thermal energy grid that enables the phased introduction of clean energy solutions that are not available to individual building-level HVAC systems. A DE system contains three key components: 1) a centralized heating/cooling plant or energy centre 2) the distribution piping system that connects the energy centre to customers and is usually run along road rights-of-way; and 3) energy transfer stations, where heat or cold is transferred to customer buildings. Geothermal or ground source heat pumps, use electricity and consistent ground temperatures, found in underground aquifers, to efficiently harness thermal energy to heat and cool buildings. When paired with a DE, it produces far fewer Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) than conventional HVAC systems. Downtown Kitchener sits atop suitable hydrogeological conditions in underground aquifers to leverage open loop ground source heat pumps. The business case explores whether investment in a project or initiative is worthwhile by identifying a problem or opportunity, outlining a proposed solution, and detailing the expected benefits, costs, and risks. It provides the City with the evidence needed to determine if a DE system should be advanced considering strategic goals and return on investment. This project builds on: • The 2019 Municipal Tools for Catalyzing Net-Zero Development study which first identified Downtown as a good candidate location for district energy • 2020 Prefeasibility Study for district energy in the same location undertaken by Waterloo Region Community Energy <u>Project</u> The District Energy business case project explored several iterations of district energy systems connecting both public and private buildings in the western part of Downtown centered at the city-owned Bramm yards. The business case for the most feasible option found:

- 67 percent GHG reductions (3,060 tonnes/year), compared to business as usual
- As the district energy system grows, it enables additional customers, more renewables, thermal storage and waste heat recovery to advance climate objectives
- As compared to site level solutions, a District Energy approach to open loop geothermal is expected to be less risky to the drinking water aquifer and be more energy and cost efficient
- District energy brings the potential for broad and important economic development benefits including:
 - Lower upfront, HVAC cost and ongoing liability for building owners and operators
 - Eliminating on site HVAC equipment frees up building space for other uses such as more homes, rooftop patios and rooftop amenity areas
 - Provides a plug and play solution to complying with potential green building mandates compelling sustainable options in the marketplace for heating and cooling solutions
 - Keeps more energy dollars local-\$1.8B energy dollars leave the region every year
 - System uptime and avoided interruptions - District energy systems are extremely reliable and can continue to provide service during electrical or gas system outages.
 - District energy enables fuel switching (e.g. from natural gas to renewables) in response to dynamic environmental or financial imperatives in a way that is very challenging for building level systems.
 - Prepares for the uncertain future of natural gas, changing coming legislation and High Performance Development Standards aimed at lowering the carbon emissions from buildings.

The final modified version (without financial details) of the consultant's final report is presented [here](#). Financial details are commercially confidential and will not be presented publicly. The Municipal Act provides for closed council meetings to discuss "a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial or financial information that belongs to the municipality or local board and has monetary value or potential monetary value"

The City has completed the district energy business case successfully. Based on its findings, further work on a downtown district energy system has been paused at this time. It provides guidance on the success conditions including strong customer demand.

Responsible Project Delivery: This criterion focuses on how well project goals, budgets and timelines are managed. It emphasizes the importance of monitoring and tracking progress to ensure projects are completed efficiently and effectively, achieving goals within financial constraints and deadlines.

Please describe how your project meets this criterion and provide any additional supporting material. If this criterion is not applicable, please explain why:

The City was awarded a grant of \$79,000 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to support this work. In response to ensuring a District Energy system aligns with customer demand, two change orders were applied to better align with a rapidly changing housing construction landscape, as has been seen over the past two years. This has resulted in impacted cost and schedule to consider additional DE concepts and options to increase financial viability and reduce risk. Governance was strong on the project with the detailed involvement with senior staff from the Planning Division, Finance and Kitchener Utilities on the primary project team, with detailed and ongoing support from the Corporate Leadership Team.
Impact/Public Value: This criterion assesses how the impact of the project will be tracked and evaluated, and the extent to which a project (has the potential) to create positive outcomes for the community and contributes to the goal(s) of the Strategic Plan.
The completion of the business case provides valuable information to inform and support future study and investment in district energy once the demand for district energy improves alongside market conditions and can support funding opportunities from other orders of government. Advancing district energy can support the economy, environment and resilience as outlined in the project description - all aligned with the strategic plan objectives.
Transparency and Communication: This criterion focuses on the dissemination of information through staff reports and other channels. It emphasizes the importance of relevant, clear, timely, and accessible communication to the community, ensuring that project goals, progress, challenges, and outcomes/impacts are openly shared.
Please describe how your project meets this criterion and provide any additional supporting material. If this criterion is not applicable, please explain why: Public reporting on this work was limited to guard financially valuable information. A district energy system is operated like a thermal utility and can have competition from private sector entities that could financially benefit from the business case. Public reporting included: • reports to the Climate Change and Environment Committee in 2023 and 2024; and the Downtown Advisory Committee; Kitchener Development Liaison Committee in 2024. • quarterly updates on project status alongside other major planning projects; and • updates as part of the triannual strategic plan updates.
Public Engagement: This criterion evaluates how well a project involves the community and/or relevant parties in its planning and execution.
Engagement for this project focused on interest holders. Specifically, staff engaged with City of Kitchener Staff (Kitchener Utilities, Planning, Engineering, Transportation, Economic Development, Facilities Management and Parks); the Region of Waterloo; University of Waterloo; Grand River Energy; WR Community Energy; Enova Power; Grand River Hospital; and development industry

representatives that primarily constructs office and residential in urban areas of the City to discuss their initial interest in connecting to DE and potential opportunities and implications on their projects.

- Staff shared reports to the Climate Change and Environment Committee in 2023 and 2024 and the Downtown Action and Advisory Committee in 2023.
- Quarterly updates on the status of the district energy base case were provided to council alongside other strategic plan projects.

Overall Evaluation (select one):

Meets Expectations

Additional Notes (if applicable)

Business case was completed within the parameters expected. The recommendation to pause additional work on District Energy carefully balanced, environmental, resilience and fiscal considerations. The complete business case positions the City for further consideration of addition work and investment to advance district energy at the appropriate time.

The City's commitment to equity, inclusion, and anti-racism is a compelling reason for proactive planning for the community's clean energy transition. A DES is a key opportunity to accelerate that transition. The energy transition is a critical opportunity to find solutions that help achieve an equitable, prosperous, resilient low-carbon community. Solutions must be centered that can advance all those aims, and in particular to ensure that marginalized community members are not left behind as energy systems change. DES systems improve resilience to the impacts of climate change and can help mitigate its inequitable impacts. District energy systems can provide a more reliable source of heating and cooling, which is less susceptible to strains than more traditional power sources (brownouts, etc.)



All Advisory Committee Meeting

November 2025

Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee:

- Troy Glover (Chair)
- Carlos Abarca
- Kim Brabazon
- Srihasya Kandala
- Rodney Gill
- James J. Young (Vice-Chair)
- Judy Stephens-Wells
- Lee-Anne Thompson
- Linda Terry
- Lori Trumper

Purpose

Compass Kitchener serves as a **liaison** between the City of Kitchener and residents, **providing advice** to Council on the community's vision and priorities during the development of the city's strategic plan. The committee also delivers an **annual report** to Council evaluating the implementation of the strategic plan with advice and recommendations.

Goals

- a) To identify and evaluate community values, goals and priorities in, and with, the community.
- b) To provide advice and recommendations to Council on strategic priorities.
- c) To evaluate and report on progress and implementation of the strategic plan to Council and the community.
- d) To ensure communication and collaboration among Advisory Committees of Council.

Specific Duties

- a) To attend and actively participate in Compass Kitchener meetings.
- b) To assist city staff in designing, implementing, and facilitating community engagement processes prior to each municipal election that identify and validate the community's vision and strategic priorities, contributing to the development of the city's strategic plan.
- c) To develop an evaluation framework in collaboration with city staff for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Specific Duties

- d) To prepare and present regular report cards to Council and the Community on Compass Kitchener's assessment of Strategic Plan implementation.
- e) To convene two yearly all advisory committee meetings for the purpose of information sharing and identifying opportunities for collaboration, one for Chairs and Vice Chairs and the second for all Committees' full membership.

Report Card

During our first term, we evaluated two strategic actions completed in 2024:

1. Accelerate Commercial Business Approvals
2. Advance Truth and Reconciliation



- ▶ Also reflected on the development and implementation of the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan
- ▶ Provided feedback and recommendations to inform future planning.

Second Half of Current Term

- ▶ Work on next year's report card
- ▶ Assist the city in its engagement process for the strategic plan

How other committees can assist us

- ▶ Provide input on ideas for all-advisory meetings – what would be most useful
- ▶ Offer suggestions for recommendations in Report Card