

October 25, 2024

Maddie Harreman-Fernandes,
Acting Planner II, Research and Forecasting,
Planning, Development and Building Services Department,
City of Ottawa

Dear Ms. Harreman-Fernandes:

FCA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Official Plan Monitoring Report. When the Monitoring Report is finalized, we anticipate a new instrument that will improve transparency, accountability and public engagement. It can also form the spine of a strategic information management system. This would be a major support for managers and staff to better align resources to achieve the City's most desired outcomes and to take corrective action with alacrity. It will also support City partners and the academic world to contribute to a better city.

It is an important and challenging project.

We recognize that this first monitoring report is just a start. We commend you for undertaking this large and challenging but critical, task. We very much look forward to participating in the development of the next monitoring report.

Getting right the performance metrics, the right targets, the key data sets, making them publicly available in a centralized location and updated regularly over time is key to measuring progress towards the official plan goals.

Our comments have been drafted to help strengthen the Monitoring Report now and over the next few years to achieve its full potential and to meet community expectations. We have chosen to focus largely on the governance of high-level strategies and on the importance of setting our sights on real changes in the lives of people in Ottawa and their natural environment.

Building an effective and streamlined monitoring system tailored to different management levels will require leadership, time, and persistence. We appreciate the Mayor's participation in the Bloomberg City Data Alliance and his enthusiasm for measuring outcomes. We are confident that many of our recommendations will soon be surpassed as the lessons from the Data Alliance are applied.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Johannis
Chair, Federation of Citizens Associations

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FCA Recommendations for the Official Plan Monitoring Report

1. Official Plan (OP) Vision: Become the Most Liveable Mid-Sized City in North America

This is a good and important goal and not impossible to measure. But without a specific and measurable definition for livability, it will be impossible to make comparisons. The vision would simply be a slogan.

The lack of definition of livability was the subject of considerable discussion at our October FCA Workshop on the draft Zoning By-Laws. Over 30 associations were represented.

As we see it, the primary purpose of the official plan is to turn aspirations into reality. As per the OP vision statement, the goal is to improve the City's liveability for the better.

In our view, the OP rightly identifies the evolution of 15-minute neighbourhoods as the optimal urban locus for the realization of that aspiration.

We suggest that future monitoring reports should aim to better align¹ what it tracks with the OP's liveability goals and, to the extent practicable, it should do so by setting out additional targets, metrics and data at a more granular neighbourhood level.

FCA suggests that the City clarify in measurable detail its vision for the "Most Liveable Midsized City in North America".

Key Performance Indicators would measure progress, inform course correction and allow comparability other mid

2. Overlap and Duplication in Monitoring Multiple Strategies

There is a considerable overlap and duplication of effort between the City Strategic Plan with its 3 long term goals, 4 Strategic Priorities and fifty-eight indicators and the OP 5 Big Policy Moves and 6 Strategic Directions with 31 indicators all stated with no metrics. This complexity has been multiplied by the additional 15 strategies and plans that have been developed with insufficient reference insufficient reference to one another.

It is better to produce one strategic monitoring report and do it with rigour.

An Annual Report to Council is necessary to build public trust and retain momentum towards the desired strategic outcomes.

Assign dedicated staff resources to make this happen.

Each data set produced by the City needs to be available through one easy to access portal to improve transparency and allow for staff, partners and stakeholders to use the data in a more integrated fashion.

¹ "The successful execution of strategy requires the successful alignment of four components: the strategy, the organization, the employees and the management systems; P. 287 (Alignment by Kaplan, Robert S. and Norton, David P., (Harvard Business School Publishing:2006)

3. Integrate the Monitoring Plan into the Management Systems

The primary merit of an effective results monitoring system is its utility in helping staff and management make evidenced based decisions to align resources with and achieve desired outcomes and impact.

Effective monitoring systems harmonise indicators when different interventions aim at the same outcome.

For instance, the outcome of “decreasing traffic accidents and serious injuries” involves multiple actors. Medical systems work to reduce average times it takes to get accident victims to trauma centers. Road safety programs for young and new drivers show reduced accident rates compared to those without training. Traffic engineering eliminates multiple accident hot spots. Each would have different indicators to measure the initial effects of their programs - such as faster victim transport, more people passing safety tests and the reduction of accident hot spots. All demonstrate how they have contributed reduced deaths and serious injury on an annual basis.

Separate systems for managing to different outcomes and to the same outcomes but with different measures, and a complex web of indicators will ensure that staff will be overwhelmed. Opportunities to reveal interdependence and reduce silos will be lost. Managers, when overwhelmed with fire hoses of data, shift from performance improvement to mere data entry compliance checks.

Finally, as the City grows issues become more complex. An outcomes targeted approach service to reduce this complexity to manageable dimensions.

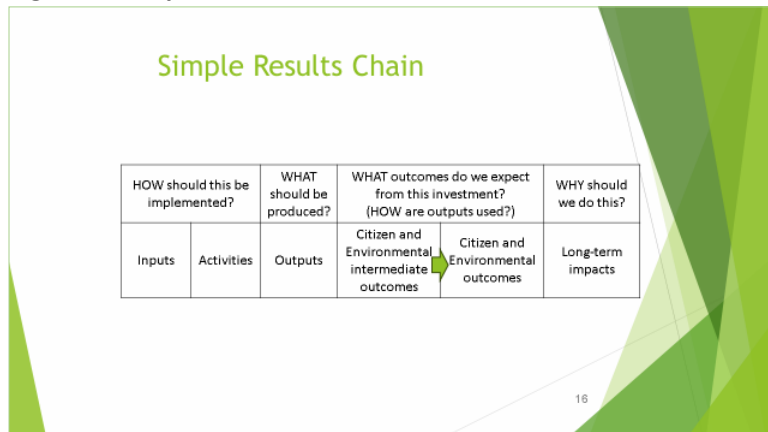
Harmonizing indicators allows for comparability among different interventions and creates insights into how better to synchronize City interventions and how management across silos can improve performance. The example of different indicators for parks in footnote illustrates possible confusion caused by different indicators especially when they are pitched at different levels of results.

FCA suggests harmonizing indicators across strategies and plans to align with strategic objectives and initiatives.

Indicators at all levels be customized to decision makers needs. This is essential to create a single monitoring system to reduce complexity and cost while improving performance.

4. Outcomes: Measuring What Matters

Figure 1: Simple Results Chain



The City favors reporting on measures of its activities and outputs. Without collecting information on the use of the outputs and whether that use has the intended results, it cannot know if it is doing the right things or doing things right. **The effect of the use of**

outputs is called an outcome. Strategic Objectives or OP Strategic Initiatives typically answer the question why are we doing this? The answer lies at the level of an outcome. It is stated in terms of an improvement in the quality of life of the end user or the more general population or to improve the status of the environment.^{2,3} Are we moving people better and faster? If yes, are parents spending more time with children and is the labour market more efficient?

Figure 2: Results Chain Applied to Strategy

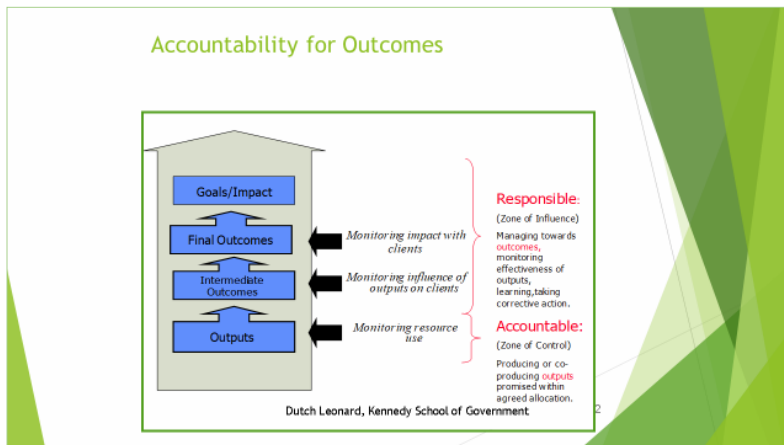
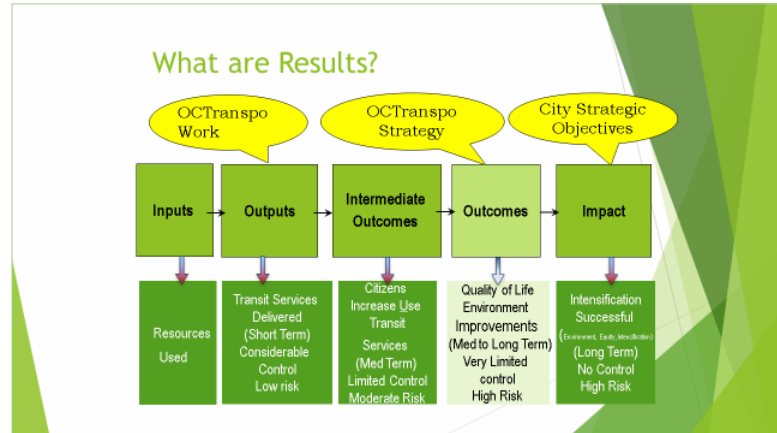


Figure 3: Accountability for Outcomes

FCA suggests that Outcomes and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be the focus of the strategy and plan development, and their achievement underpinned by analytical rigour. Monitoring Reports would demonstrate progress in the short term and achievement in the mid to long-term using SMART and QOT indicators. Monitoring reports would include the influence of City outputs on citizens as clients and beneficiaries of services and programs and the impact of that influence.

² The C3 Review of Climate Resilience Key Performance Indicators Used by Seven Canadian Cities, March 2024 defined an environmental outcome as: "a change in resilience risk or vulnerability after an adaptation plan has been in place for a specific period (5 years in most cases). By impact, we mean a desired level of mitigation of a climate impact. For example, 90% of all precipitation is absorbed and doesn't get into stormwater pipes to be discharged into local rivers."

³ The 31 indicators set out under the OP Strategic Directions do not set targets. The statements under each Strategic Directions are aspirations or suggestions for possible interventions that could achieve a specific Strategic Direction. The City Strategic Plan's Strategic Priorities are treated in the same way, For example: "A city that has affordable housing and is more livable for all (P.8)." is further detailed by the ninth Strategic Objective (P.14), which includes indicators for the number of new or renewed parks and cultural facilities (outputs) and City investment (input). However, this approach doesn't consider the desired impacts on communities or the environment, and it lacks defined measures of quantity, quality and time.

The OP Monitoring Plan, on the other hand, includes a target indicator of at least 2.0 hectares of active parkland (quality) per 1,000 people (quantity) in each transect. This data can identify underserved areas and track yearly progress towards a more livable city. In each plan, more progress is needed to measure whether parks and cultural amenities positively impact neighborhood health, safety, resilience, and environmental well-being.

5. Coverage and Quality of the Official Plan Monitoring Baseline

Attachment 1 lists the Strategic Directions in the Official Plan. The relationship to the Five Big Policy moves is not clear. Only two “Big Moves” are related to external effects. The second “By 2046 the majority of trips in the city will be made by sustainable transportation” would be an excellent outcome goal for the monitoring plan to align work across city programs focused on transit, mobility services and environmental sustainability.

The last three commit to internal activities changes including improved expertise in urban planning, embedding three of the cross-cutting issues and economic development in the framework of planning policy.

The aspirations or the indicators under the Strategic Directions are not measurable especially those that use verbs like “encourage” or “promote”. While the OP Monitoring Report Team is working hard to improve the quality of the indicators, coverage of each Strategic Direction is important to ensure citizens see that the City is serious about the commitments to OP Strategic Directions. Not all are covered in the Monitoring Plan. Another option is to reduce the number of Strategic Initiatives to the few that have the most catalytic effect.

FCA suggests that the City use the guidance in **Attachment 2: Defining Indicators** to meet the accepted standards for monitoring and evaluation.

Indicators are characterized as SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound) and include three components **Q**uantity, **Q**uality and **T**ime (QQT). (See Attachment 2 for further explanation).

FCA suggests that the Official Plan Strategic Directions be defined by desired outcomes and their indicators be underpinned by analytical

6. Fifteen Minute Neighbourhoods

There are two repetitive indicators in the OP Strategic Directions (2.2.1 and 2.2.4) regarding 15-minute neighbourhoods. In fact, they were the rationale for intensification – citizens will be able to replace cars with rapid transit and walkable access to their needs and amenities. Yet the commitment is restricted to “*encourage*”, a very weak verb. A 15-minute neighbourhood is defined in the OP annex on definitions, but there appears to be no clear intention to use City levers to ensure 15-minute neighbourhoods emerge from intensification. Neither the OP nor the Monitoring Report address their central role in intensification. Consequently, the draft Zoning By-Law does not focus on using By Laws to ensure liveable 15-minute neighbourhoods especially on main streets where communities have called for regulations to ensure mid-rises and high-rises have affordable ground-level space for small business whose purpose and design contribute to the social vitality of street.

This is significant oversight when the City is requiring people to accept the transformation of their current communities, lifestyle and reduced use of cars with no guarantee from the City to ensure that components of 15-minute neighbourhoods will be in place or even that transit will keep pace with the demands of intensification.

The success of 15-minute neighborhoods depends on City investments in amenities and efforts to ensure main streets develop the necessary social infrastructure for community resilience. This includes active and affordable small retail, restaurants, cultural centers, and other gathering places. Walkable schools, community centers, libraries, and active parks are crucial elements in the agreement between residents and the City during consultations on the Official Plan for rapid intensification. Establishing clear outcomes for quality 15-minute neighborhoods and measures of their success will demonstrate the City’s commitment to testing effectiveness and making intensification work.

FCA suggests measuring the changes in the quality of life for citizens of all ages, genders, diversity and for family life resulting from intensification.

A measurable definition of the emergence of 15-minute neighbourhoods and the components that make them liveable be developed and monitored with community input.

The impact of the New Zoning By Laws on neighbourhoods and the emergence of new 15-minute neighbourhoods be independently evaluated every five years in hubs and necessarily in N2 and N3 neighbourhoods subject to greatly increased densification targets from the agreed 3 to 4 units per lot.

7.

Transit

The Monitoring Plan only measures “Mobility’ which covers Road Safety, Active Transportation Network and Winter Maintenance. There is no specific commitment to ensuring an improved transit system. Yet increased transit is a necessary component of smart intensification and 15-minute neighbourhoods.

The monitoring team may want to test if the transit system performance could benefit from such measures as:

- Total transit user throughput increases by X% per year and active mobility increases until 50% of all trips are by transit or active mobility.
- Ridership growth over a determined and reasonable time frame (preferably post pandemic)
- Scheduled transit bus route travel times vs actual travel times
- Ease of safe walkability to transit stops/stations increases for all ages of users, parents and children
- Population is served within established radii
- Transit customer experience improves by X% per year

For Active Mobility:

- Users satisfied with key destinations and activity centers that can be reached by active modes
- Cyclists and pedestrians use bridge facilities (number, length as percent of active mobility infrastructure)
- Citizen access to public bicycle rental facilities and bike rentals increases per capita by x% by (Date)

FCA suggests that OC Transpo Strategic Objectives and their Key Performance Indicators be included in the OP Monitoring Plan. OC Transpo is integral to the success of the Official Plan across the city.

8. Affordable Housing

The Monitoring Report uses indicators to track the availability of affordable housing, including core affordable, 30% market affordable, and a 3% vacancy rate in each category, as well as decreases in empty buildings and short-term rentals. However, these indicators do not accurately account for the *net* gain in new housing units unless the loss of affordable housing is included in the calculation.

A recent study by Carleton University (Pomeroy, Steve: 2023)⁴ found that for every new unit built in

The FCA suggests using the number of core affordable units and 30% market affordable units being lost for each unit and annual rent increases per year.

Ottawa, 31 deeply affordable rental units are lost. CMHC reports an average rent increase of 17% in Ottawa after apartments are vacated, a root cause of the loss of affordable housing and increased poverty.

9. Climate Change

FCA finds the analysis and recommendations of the Citizen Climate Council (C3) Report:

Review of Climate Resilience Key Performance Indicators Used by Seven Canadian Cities, March 2024 compelling and will defer to that study and the contributions of Ottawa’s Sustainable development community and academics to recommend improved targets and indicators for the impact of the OP in the environment.

We do note that Montreal uses the **reduction in heat islands** as a climate impact measure. Because heat islands result from a combination of causes, reduced heat islands would be an excellent indicator of how well the multiple contributors to Green House Gases reduce their impact and whether there is sufficient increase in urban tree canopy throughout the city to 40%.

FCA suggests that monitoring the size and numbers of heat islands is central to measuring the impact of intensification.

FCA suggests tracking tree canopy loss by ONS neighbourhood to ensure all neighbourhoods benefit from 40% tree cover for all its universally known benefits.

10. Social Costs

International programs on Road Safety attribute the “staying power of programs” to reduce road deaths and serious injury to the use of impact measures of reduced social costs. Accidents impose heavy costs on insurance companies, taxpayers, victims and their families. By using research estimates on the costs of accidents, political decision makers understand the trade off between the costs of road safety programs and savings resulting from a reduction in death and injury.⁵

FCA suggests that an early formative evaluation examine staff capacity to use cost-benefit analysis including savings in social costs in recommending programs, services and developing regulations and to

⁴ “Affordable Homes Being Lost: Study” Article by Blair Crawford. Ottawa Citizen 12/12/23. Study by Steve Pomeroy, Senior Research Fellow at Carleton University

⁵ Measures of traffic accident social costs have included lost of family income and resulting tax loss, increase in family poverty when a bread winner dies, cost savings in insurance, hospital care, police surveillance, emergency and trauma care and the heavy cost of rehabilitation.

Our partners in CAFEs have also called for the City to measure the costs of storms, floods, heat islands to allow for a better understanding of the costs and benefits to increasing investment in mitigation, adaptation and prevention.

11. Conclusion

The FCA is concerned that the monitoring report lacks metrics for both rural and urban livability and poverty. The economy cannot thrive with high levels of poverty and the accompanying deficits in education and mental and physical health. It is disappointing that the City's commitment to reducing poverty in the latest poverty strategy also focuses largely on activities and outputs but has no measurable targets and indicators.

Cross-cutting issues like gender and inclusion have yet to be addressed.

The FCA suggests that other key contributors to livability should report their progress towards their outcomes to the yearly monitoring report. We have already suggested the OC Transpo report on its contribution to intensification. A comprehensive report should include outcomes from the Ottawa Police Service on crime reduction and citizen safety ratings, and key outcomes from Public Health as key components of a liveable city.

Implementing a results-based budget and regular evaluation program would enhance Ottawa's shift to outcomes-based management.

OP Section 2. Strategic Directions - WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

2.2.1 Intensification and Diversifying Housing Options

- 1) Direct residential growth within the built-up urban area to support an evolution towards 15-minute neighbourhoods
- 2) Provide housing options for larger households
- 3) Improve public amenities and services

2.2.2 Economic Development

- 1) Enhance Ottawa's high quality of life to attract a skilled workforce and businesses
- 2) Accommodate growth of post-secondary educational institutions (PSIs) and hospitals to support Ottawa's knowledge-based economy and health needs
- 3) Direct major employment to Hubs, Corridors and Special Districts
- 4) Integrate economic activities with residential and other land uses
- 5) Create conditions for small-business growth
- 6) Protect and preserve areas for clusters of economic activities that cannot be integrated with sensitive land uses
- 7) Support growth of important economic generators through Special District Policies
- 8) Protect locations for activities related to goods movement including freight, storage and logistics
- 9) Support rural economic development

2.2.3 Energy and Climate Change

- 1) Plan a compact and connected City
- 2) Apply sustainable and resilient site and building design as part of development
- 3) Prioritize a shift to energy efficient transportation modes
- 4) Enable the use of local renewable energy sources
- 5) Reduce the urban heat island effect and help protect the vulnerable from extreme heat
- 6) Build resilience to future flood risks and increased stormwater runoff
- 7) Protect, and enhance tree canopy and protect wetlands and other natural areas and use nature-based solutions
- 8) Enable sustainable local food production

2.2.4 Healthy and Inclusive Communities

- 1) Encourage development of healthy, walkable, 15-minute
- 2) Promote health through sustainability
- 3) Advance human health through decision-making on the built environment neighbourhoods that feature a range of housing options, supporting services and amenities
- 1) 2) Build accessible, inclusive communities, and design for all ages, including children and older adults.

2.2.5 Gender and Racial Equity

- 1) Meet the housing needs of women and racialized communities
- 2) Improved mobility options for women and racialized communities
- 3) Improved access to amenities

2.2.6 Culture

- 1) Create spaces and places for culture to live, grow and innovate
- 2) Reinforce neighbourhood and place identity through architecture and urban design
- 3) Promote the arts as an important element of placemaking

- 4) Strengthen the economic impact of the creative and cultural industries

OP Section 11 – Implementation

11.9 Provide direction for monitoring

The Official Plan is a high-level policy document intended to manage and direct the City's physical growth and change over the next 25 years. Over the planning horizon, it will be important to continually monitor the effectiveness of the Plan policies to determine whether we are on track to meeting our strategic directions and objectives, particularly in terms of meeting new demand for housing and whether the City is meeting its ambitious intensification targets. It will equally be important to monitor global, national and regional trends to ensure that our policies and objectives are still relevant, responsive and aligned to making Ottawa the most liveable mid-sized city in North America.

- 1) The City will develop and maintain a monitoring plan that addresses the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement for monitoring the inventory of industrial and residential land to accommodate growth. The monitoring plan will:
 - a) Address Council's direction that the land supply and intensification targets be reviewed no later than five years after the adoption of the plan; and
 - b) Be reviewed from time to time and modified based on the availability of data sets and the resources allocated to undertake monitoring.

HOW TO DEFINE AN INDICATOR

How to Define an Indicator

- 1) **Introduction** An indicator is a measurable variable used to demonstrate the effectiveness of a program, policy, or initiative. Indicators help in tracking progress, making informed decisions, and achieving desired outcomes. When used properly they can be used to inform stakeholders about progress towards desired outcomes set out in institutional strategy and cross cutting strategies like the environment and gender.
- 2) **Types of Indicators** Explain the different types of indicators. You can categorize them as follows:
 - **Quantitative Indicators:** These are numerical measures, such as percentages, ratios, or counts. For example, the unemployment rate is a quantitative indicator of economic health.
 - **Qualitative Indicators:** These are descriptive measures that capture non-numerical data, such as opinions or experiences. For example, citizen satisfaction surveys provide qualitative indicators of service quality.
- 3) **Components of an Indicator**
 - **Quality:** Refers to the characteristics or attributes being measured. For example, the quality of education can be measured through student-teacher ratios or literacy rates.
 - **Quantity:** Refers to the numerical aspect of the indicator. For example, the number of new livable wage jobs created in a year.
 - **Time:** Refers to the timeframe over which the indicator is measured. For example, the annual growth rate in provided vaccines.
- 4) **SMART: Characteristics of a Good Indicator**
 - **Specific:** Clearly defines what is being measured.
 - **Measurable:** Can be quantified or assessed.
 - **Achievable:** Realistic and attainable.
 - **Relevant:** Directly related to the goals or objectives.
 - **Time-bound:** Includes a timeframe for measurement.
- 5) **Steps to Define an Indicator**
 - **Identify the Objective:** Determine what you want to measure and why.
 - **Identify Assumptions:** Consider the risks involved. T
 - **Select the Type of Indicator:** Choose between quantitative and qualitative indicators based on your objective.
 - **Define the Measurement Method:** Specify how the indicator will be measured, including data sources and collection methods.
 - **Set Targets:** Establish benchmarks or targets to compare against the indicator.
 - **Validate the Indicator:** Ensure the indicator is reliable and valid through testing and feedback.
- 6) **Examples of Indicators:**
 - **Economic Indicator:** GDP growth rate, inflation rate.
 - **Health Indicator:** Infant mortality rate, vaccination coverage.
 - **Environmental Indicator:** Air quality index, deforestation rate.

7) Conclusion

Defining indicators is crucial for effective monitoring and evaluation as they provide measurable evidence of progress, success and lessons learned from implementation. Regular monitoring of by staff and management of progress towards the City's strategic Objectives will lead to better decision-making and improved outcomes for our City.