

Town of Lincoln's 2022-2026 Council Priorities Final Progress Report

Pillar I – Welcoming & Connected Community

1.1 Increase community engagement and inclusivity

Actions:

- i. Promote diversity and inclusion for existing residents and newcomers through accommodating, inclusive services and public spaces that are universally accessible citizens, fostering connections and vibrant communities
- ii. Enhance citizen engagement and participation in identifying public service improvements to bring about greater transparency, accountability and social inclusion, resulting in tangible improvements to people's lives
- iii. Implement a comprehensive customer service strategy and develop strategies for improving civic life and engagement with the Town of Lincoln

Progress Highlights:

- Active member of the Regional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group
- Undertook comprehensive policy and procedure review through DEI lens to reflect our commitment in everyday actions
- Monthly social media posts highlighting DEI-related dates of significance
- Increased participation in free community events fostering inclusivity and connection
- More in-person engagement formats like roundtables and small-group conversations
- Corporate Customer Service Strategy and manual launched, focusing on accessibility and inclusiveness
- Implemented and promoted 12-month pre-authorized property tax payment plan to better support residents
- Expanded museum outreach and accessible programming (e.g., sensory-friendly, braille materials)
- Museum facilities meet AODA standards and Ontario museum accessibility requirements (ie. accessible signage, exhibits and access to heritage buildings)
- New library programs: migrant workers hub and English conversation circle

Key Metrics:

- 44,360 participants attended cornerstone community events

- 130 Council and Committee Meetings and Workshops
- 86 Advisory Committee Meetings
- 278 delegations to Council
- 19,268 YouTube views of Council Meetings
- > 90% customer service satisfaction rate
- Issue resolution time improved from approximately 70 hours to less than 12 hours
- ~500 DEI-related social posts
- 53,049 Museum in-person visitors and 36,006 Program/Event Participants
- 855,746 total library visits
- 110,691 total library program attendance
- 1,851,164 library items circulated

1.2 Become a talent magnet

Actions:

- i. Continue to attract and retain the best talent to the broader Lincoln community, through advocacy in partnerships with private sector businesses and industry associations, to address shortages of skilled labour
- ii. Invest in Town staff training and development, to ensure business continuity

Progress Highlights:

- Partnerships with businesses and educational institutions to address labour gaps
- Targeted professional development has increased staff leadership capacity
- Regular check-ins with employees at various stages for continuous improvement
- Leadership role with Brock University to provide customized training
- Positive online presence and employer branding to attract talent
- In partnership with others, launched “Work in Lincoln” program including a new website and 4 job fairs
- Town recruitment and onboarding processes enhanced for positive experience
- Museum annually hires students and interns, creating pathways in heritage fields
- Museum events provide employment and sales opportunities for local artists

Key Metrics:

- 2,180 job fair attendees including 160 employer participants
- Ratio of 4.8 employees per 1,000 residents (5th lowest in Niagara, and below average of 5.0 employees per 1,000 residents)
- 5,945 total applicants for Town of Lincoln job openings
- 392 seasonal staff hired
- 121 total postings (including seasonal postings)
- Average of 50 applicants per posting

1.3 Promote open and transparent governance

Actions:

- i. Leverage current technology to make the Town's services, programs and initiatives more user-friendly and accessible to better engage the community

Progress Highlights:

- Enhanced digital service portals for permits, payments, and to report issues
- Launched Esri GIS and CloudPermit online systems to streamline public interaction
- Live-streamed and archived Council/Committee meetings
- Relaunched Speak Up Lincoln civic engagement platform
- Introduced new digital communications and engagement tools including Lincoln Local podcast and videos shared through social media
- New open data and performance dashboards to increase transparency
- Expanded online museum collections and community input tools

Key Metrics:

- 95% of building permits processed online
- 100% of Public Works Permits now online (i.e. Entrance, Utility, Road Occupancy /Closure, Fireline, Oversized Load)
- 87,800 visits to Speak Up Lincoln
- 220 different Town programs and initiatives promoted through various and diverse social media and communications' assets
- Top 5 social media reels garnered 44,000 total views
- ~ 15,500 total social media followers

1.4 Invest in social infrastructure

Actions:

- i. Optimize the existing parks network to ensure residents have access to nature, promoting healthy and active lifestyles
- ii. Continue to promote cultural and community initiatives through public facilities and open spaces
- iii. Explore and develop strategies for creating multi-purpose community gathering places and hubs through public-private partnerships

Progress Highlights:

- Official opening of the Sho'arishon Park in collaboration with the Region and Indigenous partners
- Continuation of annual seasonal enhancements (e.g., water-filling stations, portable washrooms, bicycle repair stations)
- Public spaces are increasingly used for cultural programming and community events

- Museum site enhancements such as passive seating areas and lighting upgrades for community gatherings

Key Metrics:

- 1,811 attendees at 25 Discover Your Park events
- 97% satisfaction rate with recreation programs and 94% referral rate
- 12 capital projects completed: 5 park-related, 7 facility-related
- 16,981 reached via outreach
- 96% (4.79/5) satisfaction rate based on 502 surveys
- 96% (4.80/5) museum referral rate

1.5 Increase connectivity through transportation network

Actions:

- i. Collaborate with regional partners to expand affordable and accessible transit options including development of a GO Train Station and mobility hub
- ii. Invest in key transportation projects and collaborate with Niagara Region to ensure seamless travel through Lincoln
- iii. Implement active transportation plan to increase non-motorized options to get around, including walkability, cycling and trails

Progress Highlights:

- Continued advocacy and planning for a GO Train station and mobility hub with Metrolinx
- Several major transportation projects completed, including road reconstructions, intersection upgrades, traffic calming initiatives as well as road safety and capacity improvements such as Greenlane Road and the Jordan Improvement Project
- Regional transit coordination to improve cross-boundary access
- Active Transportation Plan rollout of new bike lanes, sidewalks, signage and trails

Key Metrics:

- 27.1 km of active transportation improvements across the community
- 21.7 km of improved road surface on cycling network completed
- 3.48 km of new sidewalk linkages to improve safety and walkability
- 1.6 km of separated cycling paths completed
- 233 m of missing sidewalk links closed

Pillar II – Vibrant and Prosperous Community

2.1 Be a business-friendly environment

- i. Sustain civic, business and community partner outreach to attract local investment and enhance business development opportunities
- ii. Work collaboratively as a municipality to improve customer service for businesses and expedite the development process
- iii. Promote grant and funding opportunities, and undertake regular service and
- iv. process reviews to help small and medium businesses succeed

Progress Highlights:

- Introduced Development Charge Late Payment Agreements Policy for commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments
- Engaged in meaningful and solutions-oriented dialogue with potential developers to reduce processing timelines
- Ensured applications for business licensing are processed via a collaborative approach with Short Term Accommodation (STA) business owners

Key Metrics:

- 100 Business E-Newsletters distributed to 950 targeted local businesses and community members
- 70% of site plan approvals are achieved with three or less re-submissions
- 95 STA business licensing applications received for processing

2.2 Drive economic potential and community well-being

- i. Grow Lincoln's existing business community to create jobs through a structured business retention and expansion program
- ii. Improve the availability of retail offerings to keep local dollars and economic output in Lincoln
- iii. Develop strategy focusing on vibrant downtowns such as implementing additional BIA models across the community and completing community improvement designs (including Jordan Village and Vineland Central Business Districts [CBD] Design)

Progress Highlights:

- Economic Development Roundtable Discussions supported individual sectors in Lincoln, ascertaining opportunities for business investment and retention
- One-on-one meetings with larger employers in Lincoln
- Creating a business-friendly environment
- Connecting businesses with local employees through workinlincoln.ca and job fairs
- Support upskilling and skilled trades training through partnerships

- Showcase business owners and entrepreneurs, and support Shop Local campaigns
- Initiation of Vineland Central Business District Vision including consultation with landowner and community stakeholders
- Ongoing engagement with local businesses via direct outreach, Council business walks, and ongoing roundtable discussions.

Key Metrics:

- 200 one-on-one Economic Development meetings with local businesses
- 18 Economic Development and shop local videos created and released
- 15 business roundtables concluded
- 4 job fairs hosted and 2 Partnered with Employment Help Centre
- 3 downtown business walks held

2.3 Cultivate agricultural excellence through support for innovation

- i. Develop a strategy that further supports agriculture in Lincoln, through economic opportunities to drive diversity through both traditional and value-added agriculture
- ii. Expand programs with community partners to support and educate on agricultural innovation and irrigation as economic drivers

Progress Highlights:

- New diversification of farm uses' opportunities in accordance with Provincial Policy
- Supporting value-added agriculture in our Economic Development Strategy
- Permitting agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses in the new Zoning By-law
- Regional collaboration to improve opportunities for value-added, agriculturally related and on-farm diversification including more consistent application evaluation
- Continued partnerships with Brock Lincoln Living Lab, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Niagara College and other stakeholders in support of agricultural innovation, tree planting, stormwater management and low impact development
- Irrigation Project in conjunction with our Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Region
- Expedited planning approvals for greenhouse structures
- Zoning by-laws for Ag-Related and On Farm Diversified Uses were streamlined to reflect provincial guidelines and best practices.

Key Metrics:

- 20 Building permits issued in 2024 for Greenhouses, Ag-Related Uses and On Farm Diversified Uses (OFDUs)

2.4 Become a top tourist destination

- i. Increase visitors to the community and attract additional tourism-related businesses that create new jobs and help foster economic growth
- ii. Develop and implement a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in collaboration with both public and private sector partners to market Lincoln and surrounding areas as a premier tourist destination
- iii. Take on a more strategic role in managing the destination while overseeing work of the DMO in promoting the Niagara Benchlands to a variety of target markets

Progress Highlights:

- Successfully transitioned to St. Catharines-Lincoln Destination Partnership (SCLDP)
- Officially launched the Municipal Accommodations' Tax (MAT) program
- Implemented Short-Term Accommodation (STA) Licensing Framework
- Executed destination marketing under Niagara Benchlands brand
- Initiated procurement for Tourism Economic Impact Study and early-stage planning of destination strategic marketing plan
- Supported tourism development and placemaking through the Ontario Street Urban Design Master Plan and Vineland Central Business District Urban Design Vision
- Expansion of the Museum's role in cultural tourism via self-guided and guided tours
- Facilitated the formation of a private-sector-led wineries group (Niagara Benchlands Wineries) focused on enhancing guest experiences and collaborative event development

Key Metrics:

- 95 Short Term Accommodation (STA) license applications received
- \$120,906 generation in gross Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue in 2024, the first year of the program
- \$222,794 generation in gross Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue in 2025, the second year of the program
- 54 short-term accommodations successfully onboarded (issued licenses)
- 2 traditional hotels signed on to the Municipal Accommodation Tax Program
- 118 Niagara Benchlands social media brand awareness promotions
- 16 high-impact seasonal content campaigns showcasing Lincoln's tourism offerings, to drive visitation, brand awareness, and economic growth
- Recurring events – 16 events over the '22-'26 period for a total of 60 events + 55 one-off events that had listings on the Niagara Benchlands website for a total of 105 events

Pillar III – Responsible and Resilient Community

3.1 Promote a healthy & safe community

Actions:

- i. Continue to promote public safety and preparedness through education, prevention and partnerships, while maintaining standards for fire safety, emergency response and cybersecurity
- ii. Continue to develop and implement road safety initiatives such as speed reduction, traffic calming and joint truck traffic safety blitzes and enforcement initiatives

Progress Highlights:

- Shared Service Agreements with Grimsby, West Lincoln, Wainfleet, and Pelham to provide an emergency management program
- Shared Service trial with Grimsby for fire protection and emergency response services including public fire safety education and fire safety standards/enforcement
- Regular updates on cybersecurity trends with scheduled communications and mandatory training for staff and Council
- Ongoing safety blitzes by Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) and the Town
- Participation in Vision Zero road safety initiative with Niagara Region
- Several public safety education initiatives conducted annually
- Pedestrian crossover (PXO) education pamphlet promotion
- Various social media posts and promotion on Traffic Safety
- Safe School Crossing Presentation done at local schools in the community

Key Metrics:

- 2,469 emergency responses by the Fire Department
- \$17,021,023 property loss due to fire
- Zero (0) fire fatalities
- 864 fire safety inspections
- 129 Public Fire Safety outreach events that impacted over 14,440 citizens
- 25 Truck Safety Blitzes focusing on trucks bypassing the Vineland Inspection Station
 - 915 inspections with 773 tickets issued
 - 304 commercial vehicles placed out of service and 35 license plates seized
 - 1 arrest
 - 1 impounded vehicle
- 11 Various Road Safety and Traffic Calming Projects and Programs including:
 - 465 signs installed identifying 40km/h Speed limit reduction areas (urban roads)
 - 391 Black Cat Radar Speed Data Collection Studies
 - 135 temporary digital speed sign target locations

- 12 long duration digital speed signs
- 19 permanent speed humps and 2 temporary speed humps installed
- 5 Crosswalk and All-Way Stop Intersection Improvements
- 4 Uncontrolled crossing improvements (raised and curb bump-outs)
- 4 capital road projects that included physical traffic calming measures (i.e. curb bump-outs, strategic road narrowing, etc.)
- 2 new pedestrian crossovers (PXOs)

3.2 Champion environmental stewardship, heritage and smart growth

Actions:

- i. Foster responsible community and environmental stewardship through the implementation of a Climate Adaption Plan for improving climate resilience and addressing climate-related risks
- ii. Continue to build public awareness and understanding of our shared responsibility to conserve and protect the environment
- iii. Improve air quality and remove carbon from the atmosphere through growing the urban tree canopy, and further establishing policies that address tree protection, planting and property standard requirements
- iv. Promote green and low environmental impact development strategies
- v. Create an irrigation strategy in partnership with other municipalities within the Niagara Region
- vi. Review the Town's heritage processes to improve the protection and enhancement of heritage assets

Progress Highlights:

- Partner in 2Billion/Trees for All Program lead by NPCA
- Member of the Greening Consortium lead by Vineland Research & Innovation Centre
- Partnership with Ontariogreen Conservation Association to bring to fruition Lincoln's first community Mini Forest projects
- Formation of Tree Canopy Citizens' Group
- Review and enhancement of Municipal tree policies and best practices
- Establishment of Lincoln's Tree Policy
- Partner in Niagara Region's Irrigation Project
- Updated municipal tree planting standards
- Adopting Low Impact Development (LID) design options when working through the Detailed Design of development applications

Key Metrics:

- \$94,639.48 in funding secured for environmentally sustainable green infrastructure projects across 6 grants
- 2,862 community tree plantings were tracked prior to 2026, with an additional 1,300+ forecasted to be planted in 2026 bringing the total to beyond 4,100 trees planted

- 13 various educational/collaborative public events related to climate change adaptation and urban tree canopy enhancement have been held over the council term, with a few more events such as the annual Fall tree sale/giveaway and various community planting events planned throughout the rest of 2026
- 6 new naturalized, restored, and/or enhanced areas were established over the council term to support ecosystem service provision within the Town: including 2 mini-forests, multiple plantings along creeks and trails, the rain garden at Ashby Drive Park, and the revitalization of plantings at Meadowood and St. Volodymyr Parks

3.3 Sustainable financial management

Actions:

- i. Utilize the Town's Asset Management Plan and other strategies as key decision-making tools to address long-term planning of projects and infrastructure needs
- ii. Continue to conduct long-term financial forecasting, debt modelling and long-term borrowing, to ensure the viability of the future tax base
- iii. Leverage municipally owned properties as both community assets through re-purposing and sources of revenue through sales opportunities

Progress Highlights:

- Asset Management Plan requirements completed as required by July 1, 2024
- Development Charge Background Study updated
- Water and Wastewater Financial Plan and Rate Study updated
- Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award recipient for fiscal year 2024

Key Metrics:

- 68 capital projects completed which address ageing infrastructure needs
- Increased percentage of tax levy towards capital reserves by 40% Now 46%
- Increased percentage of Town portion of water/wastewater rates directed towards capital reserves (excluding Region costs) by 40% Now 38%
- Decreased percentage of capital budget funded by debt from 69% in 2023 to 0% in 2026, working toward a long-term sustainable plan

3.4 Promote intergovernmental leadership and advocacy

Actions:

- i. Strengthen advocacy for Town issues on the Provincial and Federal government agendas in order to receive grants to fund key community projects, thus minimizing burden on the local taxpayer
- ii. Participate in provincial, national and international organizations, work with business and community leaders to develop support for Town strategies and intergovernmental initiatives that translate to funding for the Town and local businesses, thus growing the local economy
- iii. Continue to explore and implement shared services models in collaboration with other local municipalities to seek efficiencies and excellence in service delivery

Progress Highlights:

- Active and regular participation in numerous regional, provincial and national industry associations to maximize advocacy opportunities including through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers Ontario (AMCTO), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
- Participation in Regional Joint Procurement Shared Services Opportunities with various local area municipalities (LAMs) and Niagara Region

Key Metrics:

- 67 grants applied for across the organization
- 90% grant funding success rate
- Close to \$100 million in external grant funding secured by the Town
- 41 delegations at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA)
- 7 joint Public Works service contracts in partnerships with other local area municipalities (LAMs)
- 37.5% cost savings realized through the joint Centreline Road Painting Service Contract initiative

3.5 Balanced and diversified housing options

Actions:

- i. Respond and adhere to changes to provincial policy to ensure adequate housing stock in Lincoln, while promoting diversified housing options to meet the current economic landscape, changing needs of families and households, and the aging population
- ii. Continue government relations and advocacy with the not-for-profit sector and senior levels of government to identify affordable housing opportunities in

partnership with Lincoln's Housing Task Force, while prioritizing affordable housing projects and opportunities housing options through partnerships, policy and incentive programs that prioritize housing opportunities for all residents, in collaboration with Lincoln's Housing Select Committee

Progress Highlights:

- Planning staff in conjunction with Lincoln's Housing Select Committee created a Housing Need and Demand Report to identify current and future housing demand in the Town and set a goal for the construction of affordable housing by 2051
- The Town worked with community partners to provide educational workshops for the broader community, for Committee and Council to present affordable housing challenges and opportunities
- A Housing Action Strategy is being created to help identify how affordable housing can be more easily constructed in Lincoln
- Through zoning changes and updates to the Town's Official Plan, staff are continually evaluating opportunities to streamline the provision of housing to allow aging in place, such as provision of Garden Suites in rural areas
- Staff have been working with developers and liaising with them and potential funding sources to increase the provision of affordable and attainable housing opportunities within new developments
- A variety of housing options have now been included in the Town's New Zoning By-law, such as Secondary Residential Dwelling Units and Garden Suites
- Changes to the Building Code Act now require permits to be issued for 100% of complete applications for single and semi-detached residential and residential accessory projects

Key Metrics:

- 301 or 68.1% of all residential permits were for townhouses or apartment units representing a diversifying housing stock from traditional single detached dwellings
- 83 rental apartment dwelling building permits issued in 2026
- 59 apartments built for seniors
- 18 purpose built affordable units created