

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Monday, December 7, 2020
Subject	Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework and 2021 Advocacy Plan

Recommendation

1. That Council approve the Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework to guide intergovernmental and advocacy activities for the rest of Council's term.
 2. That Council approve the 2021 Advocacy Priorities.
 3. That Staff report back to Council in Q4 2021 to provide an update on intergovernmental activities in 2021 and to propose advocacy priorities for 2022.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

Intergovernmental Services staff are proposing a new Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework (IG Strategy), which, if approved by Council, would guide the City's intergovernmental and advocacy activities for the rest of Council's term. Staff are also proposing advocacy priorities and an intergovernmental Outreach Plan for 2021.

The goal of the proposed IG Strategy is for the City of Guelph to successfully leverage local, regional, provincial and federal partnerships to unlock opportunities to create a future ready and innovative community for all.

The IG Strategy has 4 key components/areas of activity with corresponding action items under these objectives:

Promote – To elevate the City's reputation as a 'future ready' thought leader, innovator, trusted government partner and responsible local government.

Advocate – To influence decision-makers to advance the City's strategic interests and the wellbeing of our local community.

Engage – To nurture relationships with other orders of government, municipal partners, associations and key community stakeholders to create broad-based support for our story, our priorities, challenges and ambitions.

Inform – To provide strategic information and advice to city leaders on the latest legislative and policy developments and challenges of the day.

Key Findings

The proposed IG Strategy seeks to refresh the City's intergovernmental relations approach which was last formally updated in 2013. If approved, the IG Strategy will align the City's advocacy priorities with the priorities of the City's Strategic Plan "[Guelph. Future Ready.](#)"

It also proposes to pursue "community-based advocacy" by leveraging strategic coalition-building with key stakeholders in Guelph to strengthen the City's advocacy efforts with provincial and federal governments via Guelph Advocacy Days. Community-based advocacy would see city leaders engage in advocacy work directly alongside key local partners to advance our goals as a community as articulated in the Community Plan.

This IG Strategy also seeks to contribute to the City's anti-racism, diversity and inclusion work. It does so by continuing to strengthen intergovernmental relationship-building efforts with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and through work in support of the Community Plan as described above.

Other new elements of the IG Strategy include the roll out of an updated communications plan and a ramp-up process for election advocacy in the event of a federal or provincial election.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications associated with the new IG Strategy. Implementation will be funded using existing budgeted resources.

Report

The proposed IG Strategy seeks to refresh the City's strategic approach to intergovernmental relations, including by ensuring the City's advocacy efforts directly align with and support the City's Strategic Plan and Community Plan. The City's existing Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework was originally approved by Council in December 2013. As part of the IG Strategy, staff are also proposing an Advocacy and Outreach Plan for the 2021 fiscal year.

Intergovernmental Relations at the City of Guelph

The role of the City's Intergovernmental Services (IG) division is to engage in and support direct advocacy with federal, provincial and municipal counterparts to advance the City's strategic interests where these interests intersect with external policy, funding opportunities, and decision-making or where there are opportunities for external collaboration. IG also coordinates the City's submissions to provincial and federal consultation processes, functions as a government liaison on behalf of the City, supports the City's participation in key municipal associations (i.e. Ontario Big City Mayors, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Canadian Municipalities), and seeks to keep Council and other city leaders informed about the latest developments of the day.

Maintaining a strong and strategically coordinated intergovernmental relations program is essential in the current political environment. The City will need to work in partnership with other orders of government to ensure our local community's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic impacts. This includes engaging with municipal counterparts to amplify and advance shared

municipal interests and ensuring information about provincial and federal developments flow to Council and the City's leadership. Due to the realities of a minority federal government and an anticipated provincial election before the end of Council's term, it is also important that the City is ready to engage in election advocacy should the writ drop federally or provincially. Similarly, strategic IG coordination is necessary to influence government decision-making and to maximize the City's ability to secure funding from provincial and federal sources to stabilize City finances and stimulate local economic recovery.

Given anticipated challenges and opportunities ahead, the IG Strategy focuses on ensuring Guelph's resilience, highlighting Guelph's value-add as an innovative, mid-sized City, and advancing the City's and our local community's ambitions.

The IG Strategic Framework and Proposed Activities

The goal guiding the proposed IG Strategy is that the City of Guelph successfully leverages local, regional, provincial and federal partnerships to unlock opportunities to create a future ready and innovative community for all.

The IG Strategy has 4 key components/areas of activity with corresponding action items under these objectives. These components and actions are described below and in the attached 2020 Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework document:

Promote – To elevate the City's reputation as a 'future ready' thought leader, innovator, trusted government partner and responsible local government.

Proposed actions under this area of activity include:

- Celebrating the City's successes by seeking out opportunities to promote our future readiness as a public policy thought leader and innovative service provider
- Expanding the City's influence through participation in federal and provincial working groups, task forces and in municipal associations

Advocate – To influence decision-makers to advance the City's strategic interests and the wellbeing of our local community.

Proposed actions under this area of activity include:

- Identifying and creating annual and ad-hoc advocacy priorities and action plans in line with the priorities of the City's Strategic Plan to advance the City's interests (i.e. annual advocacy action plans, election action plans, etc.)
- Establishing and implementing an annual outreach approach to engage federal, provincial and regional decision-makers on key local issues, including through in-person or virtual "Guelph Advocacy Days", "three-levels" meetings with the Mayor/MP/MPP, and outreach with regional partners
- Coordinating the City's response to provincial and federal consultations
- Providing intergovernmental advocacy advice and support to Council and City Staff as requested where aligned with the City's priorities
- Supporting the preparation and promotion of strategic funding opportunities

Engage – To nurture relationships with other orders of government, municipal partners, associations and key community stakeholders to create broad-based support for our story, our priorities, challenges and ambitions.

Proposed actions under this area of activity include:

- Identifying and nurturing strategic partnerships with government, regional, association and local partners (i.e. Connect the Corridor partners, Wellington County, etc.)
- Collaborating with key local stakeholders to implement 'community-based advocacy' in support of Guelph's Community Plan
- Supporting Council and staff leads serving in key municipal associations (i.e. Ontario's Big City Mayors, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, etc.)

Inform – To provide strategic information and advice to city leaders on the latest legislative and policy developments and challenges of the day.

Proposed actions under this area of activity include:

- Developing, implementing and maintaining an Intergovernmental Relations Communications Plan to keep Council, City Staff and the public informed and engaged about the City's advocacy and intergovernmental activities
- Providing Council and City leaders with timely analysis of emerging legislative and policy developments of the day (i.e. Intergovernmental Updates, Info Reports, Consultation Submissions)
- Working cross-departmentally to research and analyze emerging challenges and opportunities facing the City and provide strategic policy advice as needed

To implement the IG Strategy in the year ahead, staff are also proposing Advocacy Priorities and an Outreach Plan for 2021.

Proposed Advocacy Priorities and Outreach Plan for 2021

Refreshing the City's IG Strategy affords an opportunity to embed the priorities of the Strategic Plan into the City's advocacy work. If approved by Council, these priorities would guide the City's advocacy efforts in 2021, including in federal and provincial budget consultation submissions, AMO Conference delegations, in the event of an election, etc.

Proposed advocacy focus areas are listed under their corresponding Strategic Plan priority area below:

Powering Our Future: 1. Advocacy to advance Guelph's economic recovery, including in support of the City's economic development strategy; and 2. Highlighting the work of Our Food Future.

Sustaining Our Future: 1. Advancing the City's 100% renewable energy and net zero carbon community by 2050 goals; and 2. Advocating for funding for brownfield remediation.

Navigating Our Future: 1. Promoting interregional transportation; and 2. Advancing All-Day-Two-Way Go and other Metrolinx-related interests.

Working Together for Our Future: 1. Securing further municipal pandemic supports, including for operating expenses and transit; and 2. Advocating for provincial support of municipal modernization.

Building Our Future: 1. Community infrastructure-related advocacy to maintain existing assets and build new ones; and 2. Increasing the availability of housing that meets community needs.

Further to submissions to the federal and provincial governments and to their respective legislatures, dedicated outreach is necessary to advance these priorities.

Proposed 2021 Advocacy Outreach Plan

To advance the City's priorities in the year ahead, staff propose working with Council to implement the following outreach activities. Given the realities of COVID-19, these activities can be implemented virtually until in-person advocacy can safely resume.

- Provincial/Federal "Guelph Advocacy Days" with key community stakeholders focused on our community's economic and social recovery and ensuring future readiness
- Council and Staff participation in the 2021 AMO Conference and ministerial delegations
- Annual meeting between the Mayor and the Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Regular "three-levels" meetings with the Mayor/MP/MPP with a focus on local issues and priorities
- Ongoing staff outreach with federal/provincial/municipal counterparts as needed

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications associated with the new IG Strategy. Implementation will be funded using existing budgeted resources.

Consultations

Intergovernmental Services staff consulted with Corporate Services, Public Services and Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise leadership teams in the development of this report. Intergovernmental staff from the City of London, City of Cambridge, City of Kingston, City of Burlington, Durham Region, Halton Region and Niagara Region were also consulted to compare best practices.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The proposed Intergovernmental Relations Strategy and 2021 Advocacy and Outreach Plan are fully aligned with the priorities of the Strategic Plan.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework Presentation

Attachment-2 2020 Intergovernmental Relations Strategic Framework

Departmental Approval

None.

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