



City of Guelph

Current State and Trends Report

November 2022

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1. Executive Summary

Context: Guelph's Strategic Planning Process

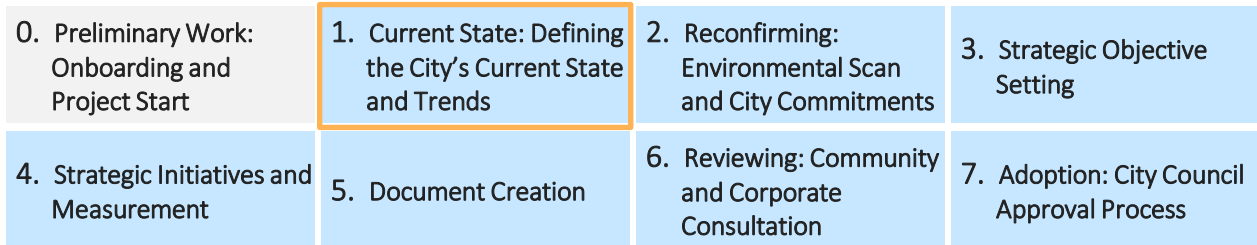
Project Context

The City of Guelph is undertaking a refresh of its current corporate strategic plan: Guelph. Future Ready. City's Strategic Plan 2019-2023. The objective is to develop a corporate strategic plan for 2024-2027 that:

- Maintains the existing strategic pillars and reconfirms the vision, mission, and values;
- Establishes realistic and attainable objectives, strategic initiatives, and key performance indicators (KPIs) for each pillar;
- Incorporates the City's financial and operational commitments;
- Reflects the direction of City Council and the Executive Team, with buy-in from City staff and the community; and
- Considers major social and economic issues (e.g., equity, diversity, and inclusion, the City's role in housing and homelessness).

Strategic Planning Process

Per the project Terms of Reference, the City's Strategic Plan Refresh involves seven key stages:



Purpose of the Current State & Trends Report

The purpose of this report is to provide deeper context and insight into the key internal and external trends and issues that the City of Guelph will need to consider as it refreshes the existing Strategic Plan for the 2024-2027 Term of Council.

As part of the Strategic Plan refresh, the City retained consulting partners to prepare this report, which takes an impartial approach to outlining the City's current state as well as those trends and issues for which it will need to plan for in the years ahead. This report has been informed by desktop research, documents provided by the City, and stakeholder engagement completed in October and November 2022.

This document includes:

- A bird's eye view of the current state of the Corporation of the City of Guelph, including key achievements and outstanding commitments related to Guelph. Future Ready. City's Strategic Plan 2019-2023;
- A high-level profile of the local community in Guelph and critical issues; and
- An overview of external trends and dynamics that are likely to impact Guelph's operating and policy environments over the next few years and decades.

This report has been appropriately scoped to focus on those key issues that are and/or will be critical to the future of the municipal sector and to the City of Guelph – both the Corporation and the community.

Methodology and Approach

To enable a 360° analysis of the City of Guelph’s internal and external environments, several research methods were employed:



Data & Document Review

Identified and reviewed relevant internal and external data and documents to assess key issues, priorities, and trends as well as the overall profiles of the community and Corporation, respectively.



Interviews

Conducted 1:1 virtual interviews with members of the City’s Executive Team to understand their key priorities and how they would like to see the City’s Strategic Plan evolve.



Workshops

Facilitated 1-hour virtual focus groups with staff representing each Strategic Pillar and 3-hour in-person workshops with the Executive Team and Corporate Management Team to deep-dive into Guelph’s current state and future vision.



Staff Survey

An 11-question digital survey was disseminated by the City to all staff to solicit feedback on the current Strategic Plan as well as key priorities in the years ahead. The survey yielded 200+ responses.

Key Findings – Internal Trends and Issues



Sophisticated, modern organization: The City has made progress in transforming the organization through process optimization, digital modernization, and continuous improvement, leading to better outcomes and services for residents. Over the last two years, the City has faced unprecedented challenges, which of course could not have been foreseen in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, the City can point to considerable progress through the implementation of the Digital and Technology Master Plan and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion strategies, among other initiatives.



Alignment between priorities and resources: Guelph’s current Strategic Plan includes several bold, ambitious goals. As the City sets priorities for the next planning horizon, it will be critical to outline and appropriately assign the required resources and funding to support implementation. The City can’t do everything or be all things to all people, so Council must make informed decisions about how best to allocate limited resources and understand the implications of their collective choices.



Strong, committed staff team: Guelph employees are highly engaged and proud of their work and contributions to both the Corporation and the community. The City should continue to drive staff engagement, ensuring employees feel valued, as part of its succession planning, recruitment and retention strategies.



High quality of life: According to 2022 satisfaction data, 96% of residents believe the quality of life in Guelph to be “good or very good.” There is also strong satisfaction with City services and “value for money.”



Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI): Important work is underway advancing EDI within the Corporation and in the community through strategies and plans, and by ensuring EDI is informing day-to-day operations – for example, prioritizing road safety in equity-deserving communities and implementation of an equity lens. Moving forward, EDI should have a more explicit role in the City’s Strategic Plan as a foundational element to everything it does and aspires to be.

Key Findings – External Trends and Issues



Changing provincial legislation: In less than a year, the provincial government has introduced four bills that, taken together, mark the most significant reforms to Ontario’s planning and development system and will fundamentally transform the structure and governance of municipal government. Intended to support the Ford government’s commitment to build 1.5B homes in 10 years, these reforms mark a new – and uncertain – era of the provincial-municipal relationship.



Climate change: Municipalities stand both as victims of climate volatility and as stewards of climate adaptation. Local governments are incurring increasing clean-up costs following extreme weather events, which are only growing in number. At the same time, municipalities have a critical role to play in mitigation and adaptation as major direct emitters of GHGs and as policymakers at a local level who can drive behavioural change and transformation to support climate sustainability and a resilient future.



Economic challenges and uncertainty: COVID-19 hit municipalities hard, and while most came out the other end in good standing, the pandemic will impact how future programs and services are delivered and the assets needed to support them. However, as governments look to rationalize and plan for future spending and infrastructure investment, they do so in an unstable economic environment: high inflation and interest rates have made it more expensive for municipalities to do exactly what they did last year. With few revenue tools at their disposal, local governments are left with difficult choices: significantly increase taxes, reduce services and/or defer capital projects. Difficult budget years are ahead.



The spectrum of social issues: The experience of COVID-19 further widened economic disparities and existing social inequities in our communities. In Guelph, for example, women and recent immigrants were among the most likely to lose their jobs during the pandemic. The pandemic also resurfaced concerns about how to effectively tackle homelessness, mental and health and addictions, with a growing consensus that intergovernmental collaboration is critical to building the ‘wraparound services’ needed to meaningfully address these issues.

2. Current State: Corporation of the City of Guelph

Overview: The Evolution of the Corporation

The Corporation of the City of Guelph provides services and programs to Guelph's 140,000+ residents (2021 Census data), businesses, and visitors across four service areas and with a staff complement of approximately 2,100+ full-time, part-time and contract employees.

The organization has made significant strides to be a more modern and effective government, committed to service excellence and business transformation. It has sought to better integrate data-driven decision-making, performance measurement, project management and innovation within corporate culture.

This organizational transformation has been supported by Guelph. Future Ready. City's Strategic Plan 2019-2023, approved by Council in 2019, and related plans, strategies, and initiatives, including the in-place Multi-Year Budget, the Strategic Action Plan and Performance Measurement Framework, among others.

Moving forward, given an uncertain and unpredictable external environment, the City will need to continue to focus on ensuring strategic alignment within the organization at all levels (Council, senior leadership and frontline staff) to ensure the administration is appropriately resourcing and delivering on its key priorities.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Reflecting on the last 2+ years

Outside of the immediate public health crisis, the pandemic had the dual effect of accelerating growth in some areas of the City (such as digital service delivery) and hindering progress in others (such as workforce development).

As noted in the [2021 Progress Report for Guelph. Future Ready](#), the Corporation remained resilient over the course of the pandemic by:

- Adapting as needed to shifting priorities;
- Continuing to ensure financial sustainability and quality services for residents, businesses, and visitors;
- Advancing and/or completing progress on critical corporate plans (e.g., Corporate Asset Management Plan, Climate Change Adaptation Plan); and
- Realizing meaningful progress on the initiatives that will support the City in achieving its **vision of “an inclusive, connected and prosperous city where we look after each other and our environment.”**

Guelph. Future Ready: Key Achievements and Outstanding Commitments

Since adoption of the Strategic Plan, the City has made progress on over 75% of its strategic initiatives.

The following slides summarize the five strategic priority areas from Guelph. Future Ready. City's Strategic Plan 2019-2023, outlining for each at a high-level:

- ✓ The key achievements accomplished during the lifecycle of the Strategic Plan.*
- ✓ Outstanding commitments.*
- ✓ Stakeholder feedback received to date.†

The progress made through the implementation of the Strategic Plan demonstrates that the Corporation continued evolution into a mature, data-driven organization focused on clear goal-setting, alignment of goals to capacity and resources and performance measurement.



*Additional detail on progress made as well as work underway and/or committed to can be found in the City's Commitments Inventory (November 2022), drafted by staff for the purpose of the Strategic Plan refresh, as well as in the City's [Guelph. Future Ready 2021 Progress Report](#) and accompanying Attachment – [Overview of 2021 Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators and Strategic Initiatives](#) (April 2022).

† See the full summary of stakeholder input provided to date in the Appendices. Note that this section is entirely derived from stakeholder input on the pillars. It is not intended to provide recommendations on what the pillars will or should include in the refreshed Strategic Plan, but rather to capture the feedback provided on each pillar.

Powering Our Future

Key Achievements

- Our Food Future – offered a range of business programs (COIL, Seeding our Food Future, R-Purpose, R-Purpose Micro).
- Development of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.
- Grow Guelph Partnership – established Economic Development division as backbone agency for the organization; advanced business retention and attraction and focused on COVID-19 response and recovery.
- Completed survey of local businesses.

Ongoing Commitments

- Tourism and Culture Rebuild and Plan.
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.
- Community Improvement Plan (In development).
- Smart Cities Challenge – Our Food Futures.
- Grow Guelph Partnership.

Key Stakeholder Insights

- Guelph has a diverse economic base and success in some key sectors. Moving forward, Council could focus on those key clusters identified in the recently completed Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and areas where Guelph has a competitive advantage.
- The City could do a better job at building a two-way dialogue with businesses, identifying the value proposition for businesses, and better understanding what they need to succeed.
- Initiatives on workforce development were hindered by the pandemic; given current labour market challenges, there is a need to refocus on workforce development and consider it in the context of other priorities (e.g., housing supply and affordability, especially rental housing).
- Economic Development was a critical resource and advocate for local businesses during the height of COVID – this may need to continue to be the case if a recession materializes.
- Pillar should have a stronger connection to asset management (e.g., require servicing and assets to grow, attract and support businesses).
- Downtown revitalization/renewal should be included more explicitly in the refreshed Plan.
- Need to be clearer moving forward about how the City wants to advance innovation – there should be consideration given to moving away from the Innovation Corridor, which is more of a marketing term for the City.

Sustaining Our Future

Key Achievements	Ongoing Commitments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working towards achieving 100RE – Increase in corporate energy supplied from renewable sources; reduction in GHGs and energy consumption. Development of a Community GHG Inventory and improvement in emissions since 2018 baseline established. Climate Adaptation Plan is in development; to be followed by the Sustainability City Master Plan. Facility upgrades (e.g., West End Community Centre) to support energy efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Supply Master Plan. Wastewater Treatment and Biosolids Management Master Plan. Water and Wastewater Servicing Master Plan. Stormwater Management Master Plan. Solid Waste Management Master Plan. City’s Race to Net-Zero. Climate Adaptation Plan (In devel.). Solid Waste Environment Management System Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Energy Initiative. Urban Forest Management Plan. Emerald Ash Borer Plan. Natural Heritage Action Plan. Natural Heritage System (OPA 42). Grand River Source Protection Plan. Integrated Waste Management Strategy.

Key Stakeholder Insights

- Pillar includes many big, ambitious goals, but there is a lack of clarity in how the City will realize these goals and attach appropriate resources and budget to deliver on them. The “deliverable” in this pillar is a challenge.
- Commitment to environmental sustainability is perceived as part of Guelph’s brand and identity – but how can it be balanced against everything else that the City wants and/or needs to do? Further, it is now an expectation of municipalities, not a differentiator.
- Some conflict exists between the overarching goals and service delivery/levels (e.g., commitment to net zero and the reduction of GHGs, but no adjustments to adjusting grass cutting service levels or parking requirements).
- Many of the objectives/initiatives extend well beyond a four-year term of Council (e.g., reducing Guelph’s energy footprint through retrofits).
- It may take time to evolve this pillar. For example, through the building of new initiatives (e.g., connection to Guelph’s Asset Management Plan) and moving on from what is completed or underway.

Navigating for Our Future

Key Achievements	Ongoing Commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of the Guelph Transportation Master Plan (TMP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guelph Transportation Master Plan (TMP).• Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan (under the TMP).• Guelph Transit Master Plan (In development).• Cycling Master Plan.• Community Road Safety Strategy.• Transit Growth Strategy.• Connectivity Index.• Fleet Electrification Project.• Emerging Transportation Technologies Office.• Advocate for Regional Transit Connectivity.• Guelph Transit Fare Strategy.

Key Stakeholder Insights

- Very expensive pillar in terms of capital investment required – it will be critical to think through how projects and initiatives will be funded, given that staff have currently been trying to advance initiatives with limited resources (e.g., the adoption of clean tech, emerging technologies transportation office).
- Community groups and advisory committees could be leveraged to help the City “get it right” as it faces difficult, longer-term choices.
- Challenges with staffing at all levels should be addressed as Guelph moves to implement the TMP and Transit Future Ready Action Plan.
- Parks, trails, and active transportation should be more directly called out as part of transportation network connectivity.
- Need to distinguish local transportation improvements from enhancing regional transit connectivity – these are two separate things.
- City should continue its leading-edge efforts on equity and safety as it builds out its transportation network.

Working Together for Our Future

Key Achievements	Ongoing Commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Began implementation of the Service Simplified Customer Service Strategy.• Maintained AA+ credit rating (2021); AAA credit rating (2022).• Updated Budget Policy – an adoption of multi-year budget process.• Streamlined building permit and application system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enterprise Risk Management Framework.• Digital and Technology Master Plan.• Employee Diversity and Inclusion Plan.• Records and Information Management [RIM] Strategy.• One City. One Voice. Shared Purpose.• Wellness Strategy.• Long-term Financial Planning Framework.• Service Simplified Strategy.• Human Resources Strategy.

Key Stakeholder Insights

- Resident-facing services find ways to grow, and the teams that get left behind are ‘back office’ – HR, IT, Finance, etc. But these service areas are critical to implementation of all other pillars and priorities within the Strategic Plan.
- Refreshed Plan should highlight staff recruitment and retention to ensure Guelph continues to be an Employer of Choice.
- IT, risk management and emergency planning should all have a ‘home’ within this pillar in the refreshed Plan, given the experience of COVID-19 and the need to ensure business continuity and security.
- Financial sustainability will continue to be a priority moving forward. While Guelph is in a good financial position, there are many significant projects demanding resources from a limited revenue pool in the years ahead.
- Customer service and communication modernization should continue to advance and be a focus of the updated Plan.

Building for Our Future

Key Achievements

- Corporate Asset Management Plan – development of core asset management plans, approved ahead of regulatory timing requirements.
- Affordable housing – met targets for new developments and secondary rental units in 2020.
- Implementation of the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy – partnership with the County of Wellington Housing Services, which awarded support to 2 supportive housing projects.
- Construction of key assets – Baker District redevelopment and South end Community Centre schedule advanced.
- Community connections and equity – Completion of the Community Plan refresh and hiring of two new positions to support issues of equity and systemic racism.

Ongoing Commitments

- Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities Action Plan.
- Guelph’s Affordable Housing Strategy.
- Operations Campus.
- Cultural Heritage Action Plan.
- Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- Community Safety and Well-being Plan.
- South End Community Centre [Budget challenges].

Key Stakeholder Insights

- Pillar is Council’s major focus – building out the City. The challenge is that it involves several issues that are outside of the municipality’s control (e.g., root causes of mental health and addictions). The City needs to be clearer about what it can do/deliver vs. advocacy support
- In some respects, this pillar, as well as the others, will need to work in conjunction with the financial management piece in Working Together – can’t fulfil the mandate of this pillar without appropriate funding.
- Housing supply and affordability should continue to be a focus in the new Plan but should be better defined in terms of what the City can realistically achieve (i.e., the City is not a developer nor a social service provider).
- Refreshed Plan could consider building in objectives relating to fire and paramedic services, healthcare services within the municipality’s jurisdiction (e.g., WDG Public Health), and removing police key performance indicators.

The City's Local Board and Shared Services (LBSS) and Partnerships

The City collaborates with various organizations that span across different sectors to help deliver services and address challenges within Guelph's community.

The list at right is not exhaustive but does demonstrate the breadth and reach of the City's collaborative partners.



WELLINGTON COUNTY



Looking Ahead: Key Considerations for the City

Financial Health

The City of Guelph has a solid financial foundation – strong reserves, a AAA credit rating (as of 2022), responsible debt management and long-term planning frameworks in place (such as the Long-Term Financial Framework and Capital Program Resourcing Strategy) to guide future investments. The City is also one of the first to establish a multi-year budget process, which is increasingly a best practice to enable long-range planning to better manage budgetary pressures.

What's next? With added fiscal pressures due to high inflation and interest rates and provincial legislation that will reduce municipal revenues, the City will need to be realistic about funding constraints; there may be difficult decisions ahead about what to prioritize. These decisions will also need to be considered against long-term investments required to “future proof” the City – addressing the \$289M infrastructure backlog and implementing the Climate Adaptation Plan, once approved.

Workforce Development

The pandemic has heightened the baseline of HR pressures in municipalities due to retirements, burnout, and mental health challenges. Further, amidst a national labour shortage, municipal administrations are in a “war for talent,” competing against their peers and other sectors that may be able to offer more competitive salaries, benefits, and perks. Within the Corporation, there are currently staffing gaps at all levels, from management to operations.

What's next? While Guelph currently has a highly engaged staff (59%, according to 2021 employee engagement data), it will need to continue to focus on recruitment and retention, staff development and engagement, and defining the Corporation’s unique value proposition as an employer. Achieving the City’s ambitious goals is dependent on having the staff resources to implement them.

Priority-Setting

The City’s ambition is lofty and admirable: achieve net-zero, support housing supply and affordability, advance social equity, and address the root causes of mental health and addictions, to name a few. However, these goals have not always been aligned to budget and resource allocations – several initiatives in *Guelph Future Ready* did not meet their targets due to a lack of funding and staff resources/capacity.

What's next? As the City refreshes the Strategic Plan for the next term of Council, the newly elected Council and administration will need to closely evaluate the scope of its priorities – what can it directly deliver, for example, versus where it should advocate or partner. This may involve better defining what is “core” to the City – whether that be in terms of “core services” provided by municipalities or “core” in terms of the City’s identity and community commitments.

3. Guelph Today: Community Profile and Key Issues

Guelph – Demographic Overview

Guelph is one of Ontario’s fastest growing communities. Home to respected post-secondary education institutions and diverse and innovative industry, the City is also an attractive place to live due to its plentiful green space as well as its easy access to the GTA.

Rapid Growth

- Between 2016 and 2021, the City experienced a 9.1% population increase between 2016-2021, well above the provincial average of 5.8%.
- Guelph is forecasted to reach 203,000 inhabitants and 116,000 jobs by 2051.
- As of 2022, the City anticipated continued residential growth as part the ‘urban exodus’ from the GTA, accelerated by the pandemic.
- Further, as part of Bill 23, Guelph must achieve a revised provincial target of 18,000 housing unit completions in the next 10 years. Prior to this, Guelph had a target of 10,850 housing completions by 2031.

A Diverse Community

- Unlike many municipalities struggling with outmigration of young people, young adults (aged 20-34) make up 24% of the population, almost 20% higher than the national average and 12% higher than the rest of Ontario.
- Guelph also has a significant number of older residents, with many living beyond age 85. By 2031, seniors will make up 30% of all residents.
- The median household income is \$93K, slightly higher than the provincial median at \$91K, although as noted below, income disparity and poverty rates are a concern in the community.

Equity and Diversity

- The cultural composition of Guelph is becoming more diverse, largely due to immigration. By 2041, 60K immigrants will call Guelph home.
- Located on treaty land, Guelph has a rich Indigenous history; 2,200 residents identify as Indigenous.
- Equity continues to be a priority in the City – resident satisfaction data indicated that 1 in 10 people face barriers accessing City services.
- Census data indicates that discrimination has varied in recent years, with local hate crimes declining from 12 incidents in 2019 to 7 in 2021 but there was an increase in 2020, resulting in 22 reported hate crimes.

How do Guelph Residents Live? Housing Trends in Guelph

Like many municipalities across Ontario, the rapid growth of the community, spurred in part by the COVID-19 GTA exodus, has renewed concerns about ensuring access to affordable and attainable housing for all community members. As outlined later in this report, housing supply and affordability will continue to be a defining issue for all levels of government in the years ahead, and **Guelph will need to be prepared to address shifting mandates, responsibilities and targets.**

Guelph currently faces several challenges on the housing front:

- While the City is meeting its targets for affordable home ownership and secondary purpose-built rentals, it is falling short when it comes to primary rental housing.
- Coupled with an already low vacancy rate for rentals (below a healthy vacancy rate of 3%), the lack of new affordable rentals coming online may impact the local workforce and economy— if people can't live where they work, they may choose to work elsewhere.
- The cost of housing continues to escalate in Guelph – even as the housing market outlook is uncertain – with the City continuing to be a “seller’s market” as of late November 2022.

34.1%

of Guelph residents are renters, which is higher than the provincial average. As of 2021, none of the new rental units built in the City over the last five years were below the City’s affordable rental threshold, and rent continues to rise. In 2022, the average rent increased by 23% over the previous year.

In 2022, the average home price in Guelph was \$842,082, higher than the Ontario average of \$836,300. Over the last five years, the cost to buy a home in Guelph has nearly doubled.



Demand is outstripping supply. Between 2011-21, 7,655 new homes were built, considerably fewer than previous decades – 9,230 between 2001-2010 and 7,730 between 1991-2000. Recent CMHC data from October 2022 indicates new housing starts and completions have declined by 42% year-over-year in the Guelph area.

Homelessness, Poverty and Food Insecurity

Guelph's Community Plan articulates a vision for the City that is for everyone, including community members facing homelessness, poverty, addictions and mental health challenges, and food insecurity. The incidence of these interrelated social challenges in Guelph is on the rise, exacerbated by the pandemic and now rising inflation, and of great concern to City Council, the administration, and the community.

1 in 7 residents report facing food insecurity, which is higher than in the County, but lower than the provincial rate. Access to food is tied to income insecurity – people who cannot afford food are struggling to pay for other living expenses (e.g., shelter, clothing, etc.).

In August 2022, the Guelph Food Bank reported a 63% uptick in demand compared to last year.

Approximately 270 people in Guelph-Wellington are homeless every night. Further, 62% of homeless individuals experience chronic homelessness (6+ months homeless in the past 12 months).

In the summer of 2022, the Royal City Mission assisted 850 people, up from 250 in fall 2021.

The City continues to take action to address social challenges in Guelph and support the health, safety, and well-being of the most vulnerable members of the community. Some of these initiatives include:

- ✓ **Creation of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness and Community Safety** with City leaders and community agencies. This work has enabled three community supportive housing projects to move to the development phase.
- ✓ **Community-focused Solutions** - Initiatives have included community garden and/or market projects (such as the Silvercreek Market or North End Harvest Market), aiding the Guelph Food Bank in shifting towards servicing community groups at-large, hosting the Community Resilience Summit, working with Indigenous community organizations to address food insecurity, and advancing the Toward Common Ground partnership.

Throughout COVID-19, many municipalities like Guelph stepped up to meet increased service delivery demands in these areas. But as the other governments look to scale back homelessness and other social service funding, municipalities are concerned about what happens next: will municipalities absorb funding or develop 'exit strategies' to reduce service levels? If so, what will the community impact be?

The Growing Mental Health and Addictions Crisis

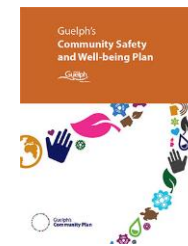
Tied to the socioeconomic challenges outlined on the previous slide, the City has been particularly attuned to issues of mental health and addictions in the community. The 2019-2023 Strategic Plan has an explicit objective of “Helping prevent and mitigate the challenges associated with mental health and addictions by working to address root causes.” In line with this commitment and **as a frontline service provider, the City has worked hard to develop partnerships to ensure people have the ‘wraparound supports’ they require, while also being a strong advocate for an enhanced provincial and federal role in - and funding for - tackling these issues.**

The Ongoing Mental Health and Addictions Crisis

- The Ontario Drug Policy Research Network reported nearly 2,500 opioid-related deaths in 2020, up by 60% from 2019 and making it the worst year on record for opioid-related death since tracking began.
- Guelph is on the frontlines of this crisis. From 2019-2020, the City saw a 242% increase in fatal overdoses. In 2021, 21 people died from drug poisoning, three times higher than 2019.
- Wellington County Home has reported that 75% respondents experience mental health and substance abuse challenges.



The Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team is a system in which Waterloo-Wellington Canadian Mental Health Association members and police officers jointly respond to mental health, addiction and crisis related calls. The goal is to ensure individuals have better health outcomes by receiving the most appropriate community-based crisis response at the time of need.



The City of Guelph currently has **10 plans that include a mental health lens** and is actively working to create the conditions for mental health well-being in the community, including for those facing substance abuse challenges.

The City has also undertaken significant advocacy to other orders of government in the Mayor’s capacity as Chair of **Ontario’s Big City Mayors** (OBCM). In June 2022, OBCM called for an emergency meeting with the province to address issues around homelessness and/or mental health and addictions, building on the recommendations of its 2021 paper “Working Together to Improve Our Wellness.”

Guelph's Economic Landscape in the Post-COVID Recovery

While Guelph has several attributes that make it a great place to do business, **the City must continue to focus on how it can support economic development and business success and address interrelated issues, such as housing affordability, to spur economic development.**

Guelph's Value Proposition

Educated working age population: The median age in Guelph is 38, compared to 41 in Canada. Nearly 30% of residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, which is 30% higher than the average.

Major economic sectors: Manufacturing, educational services, retail trade, healthcare, and social assistance employ almost half (49.5%) of all Guelph residents.

Innovation hub: Located within Ontario's Innovation Corridor, the City is focused on supporting and advancing innovative partnerships to solve key challenges around the circular economy, climate change, life sciences, etc.

Town-and-Gown effect: Guelph is home to more than 30,000 post-secondary students, with UofG as the anchor for the City's innovation ecosystem, R&D activities, and partnerships.

Looking Ahead to 2023 and Beyond

- **Pandemic impacts continue:** Many City departments in Guelph have been impacted by the pandemic, experiencing revenue losses (particularly in the transit sector), layoffs, additional expenses, and project delays/deferrals.
- **Local businesses seem to be rebounding:** Like many municipalities, local businesses struggled during the height of the pandemic, with many shuttering their doors. However, in fall 2022, Statistics Canada ranked Guelph second among 25 urban centres on its Real-Time Local Business Conditions Index.
- **Economic growth:** Guelph's economy is growing slowly, compared to its regional peers. In 2021, for example, the economy grew by 5.4%, nearly offsetting the 6% pandemic-related contraction in 2021 but not actually expanding.
- **Labour shortage:** Like many regions, Guelph faces a chronic labour shortage. In spring 2022, employers across the City reported over 1,000 job vacancies. Skilled trades workers are particularly in short supply, which may impact critical infrastructure projects. The City administration itself is reporting staffing gaps at all levels.
- **Interlinked priorities:** In the years ahead, the City will need to continue to address issues like housing affordability, transit and infrastructure investment, which are critical to workforce development.

“Green Guelph”: Climate Change and Sustainability

Guelph is a leader in the environmental space, with a strong track record in waste diversion, energy management and groundwater conservation. Environmental sustainability and stewardship are also key components of the City’s identity and brand.

The City has an ambitious climate change agenda.

The 2019-2023 Strategic Plan included an explicit focus on climate change responsiveness and preparing the Corporation and community for a net-zero carbon future. The City has made some progress on this agenda – in 2020, the City’s GHG emissions decreased by more than 13% since 2018.

Further, in 2021, the City committed to the United Nations Race-to-Zero campaign, along with Toronto, Brampton, and Hamilton, and set targets to:

- Reduce their community carbon emissions by 63% against the 2018 baseline by 2030.
- Work with the community to become a net zero carbon community by 2050.

Infrastructure and asset management will also be critical to the City’s future sustainability.

Guelph manages an inventory of over \$4 billion in assets and has estimated that approximately \$1.1 billion will be required to address its aging infrastructure. Like most other municipalities, the City faces a gap between the funding required and the amount available to allocate from the annual budget to capital reserves. However, there is growing evidence that infrastructural renewal is key to supporting climate change mitigation. A 2022 report from the Canadian Climate Institute, Damage Control, demonstrated that if the public and private sectors start investing in infrastructure resiliency, the economic impact of climate change could be cut by 75%.



Among 600 surveyed Guelph residents in 2019, 97% consider “environment, water and waste” as the most important issue for the City to focus on over the next decade.



Without a reduction in GHGs, the average temperature in Ontario will rise by 3 to 8°C within the next century, reducing air quality, increasing extreme weather events, impacting the ability to grow food, and risking human health and well-being.

4. External Trends and Issues

Introduction: Municipalities at a Crossroads

The municipal sector is at a critical moment of transformation and transition. COVID-19 highlighted the tenuous financial state of Ontario's municipal sector, but the challenge pre-dated the pandemic, rooted decades of increasing service delivery responsibilities, or 'downloads' from the province. What is different today is the scale of the challenge in the current economic climate and in the context of the province's recent rethinking of municipal governance and roles and responsibilities.

For decades, municipal governance has been a source of great debate in Ontario, circling around a familiar question set:

- ▶ How should responsibilities be divided between the province and municipalities?
- ▶ How much autonomy should municipalities have in delivering on their responsibilities?
- ▶ Do municipalities have sufficient revenue sources to meet their responsibilities?
- ▶ Are they structured to plan and deliver public services efficiently and effectively?

The following pages highlight some of the major challenges facing municipalities against the backdrop of the most significant transformation of the sector in a generation..

“Do more, with the same or less”

Over the last 25 years, Ontario municipalities have been called upon to expand their portfolio of services and to fund them, in whole or part. Increased responsibilities from the province to municipalities, particularly in human services, have resulted in unfunded mandates, meaning these new service areas have not been accompanied by sufficient funding or new revenue sources to fund them.

Municipalities have also faced what might be called “implicit downloading,” whereby federal or provincially driven policies create new costs for municipalities. Hospital wait times, for example, put pressure on local ambulance services. Municipalities' service delivery responsibilities have grown, but the tools to fund them have not, and the limitations and inadequacy of the property tax system and funding relationships with other governments have become glaringly apparent.

As the order of government closest to the people they serve, municipalities must also address the broader social, economic, and environmental challenges facing 21st century communities. These demands include investments in equity and inclusion, climate adaptation and energy transition, and the digital economy and connectivity.

2022: Ontario Government Priorities

In June 2022, Premier Ford won his second majority mandate on a promise to “get it done.”

Key election commitments included:



Building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.



Building infrastructure projects, including Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass.



Advancing public transit, including the Ontario Line and Eglinton Crosstown West extension.



Continued focus on red tape reduction and efficiencies across the public sector.

The Ontario government faces a difficult road ahead as it looks to deliver on these key priorities:

- **The current economic climate will make it challenging to deliver infrastructure and transportation projects** – the Eglinton Crosstown saw its opening delayed earlier this year, for example.
- **Ongoing labour negotiations will continue to disrupt government business** – the negotiation with CUPE education workers, which saw the government backpedal on its third usage of the Notwithstanding Clause after facing significant public backlash, is just the first of several education union challenges ahead.
- **Ontario’s healthcare system is in crisis** – wait times are long, healthcare institutions are understaffed, and pediatric hospitals are at capacity as the province faces the trifecta of surging influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 rates.

Despite the challenges facing Ontario, the Ford government has shown no signs of slowing down in terms of delivering on its priorities. The government’s Fall Economic Statement doubled down on these commitments to build and given that it is halfway through the first year of its second term, time is critical if the government wants to hold onto its aggressive agenda. **This sense of urgency may help explain the rapidly evolving provincial-municipal relationship – and the slate of legislation targeted at the municipal sector – in recent months.**

Transformation in Land Use Planning and Municipal Governance

In 2022, over a nine-month period, the Government of Ontario has introduced legislation that, if all bills are passed, will fundamentally alter Ontario’s land use planning system and municipal governance frameworks. The changes are intended to support the province’s plan to build 1.5 million homes by reducing barriers to building, including streamlining municipal planning approvals processes.

Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 (March)

- ✓ Mandatory delegation of site plan control to staff.
- ✓ Refunds for ZBA and SPA fees where no decision made during the statutory timeframe.
- ✓ Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA) tool.
- ✓ New Ministerial powers for certain OPAs and new OPS.

Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022 (August)

- ✓ Powers to direct staff.
- ✓ Veto power.
- ✓ Appointment power for agencies, boards, commissions, and other BPS organizations.
- ✓ Power to hire/fire organization review.
- ✓ Propose budget.

Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (October)

- ✓ As-of-right zoning.
- ✓ Streamlined approvals – e.g., no site plan control required for projects < 10 units.
- ✓ Changes to municipal fees and charges (DCs, CBCs, parkland).
- ✓ Reduced role for Conservation Authorities.
- ✓ Changes to upper-tier planning role.
- ✓ OLT to restrict third-party appeals.

Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022 (November)

- ✓ Provincially appointed facilitators to assess select regions to support extension of Strong Mayors powers and determine roles and responsibilities between upper and lower tiers.
- ✓ Stronger Mayor powers in Toronto and Ottawa: propose and amend bylaws related to provincial priorities with 1/3 vote of Council.

Potential Implications and Risks for Municipalities (1/2)

The following table outlines some impacts, risks, and unknowns of the Ontario government’s reforms to land use planning and municipal governance. This is not intended to be a full analysis of the impact of these reforms on the sector, in view of the limits of this Current State and Trends Report and the unknowns surrounding the details and regulations that are still to emerge with the legislation announced this Fall. Rather, what follows below is a synthesis of some of ‘top of mind’ issues and concerns for municipalities.

Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022

- **Applications fees refund:** Due to the timelines necessary for internal review, consultation and collaboration/iteration with applicants, as well as the complexity of some applications, municipalities may refuse applications in order to meet the statutory timeline, which then adds to the backlog of OLT cases and delays in the creation of new housing. Municipalities may also face reduced revenues as well as the need for additional staff to meet the goal of the application – a City of Guelph staff report (November 22, 2022) indicates that the City faces a potential loss of \$840K in fee revenue as well as the need for 7 additional FTEs.
- **Community Infrastructure Housing Accelerator:** Potential to speed up approvals for housing and community infrastructure, while increasing transparency absent in MZO (since the municipality would need to provide notice and conduct public consultation before requesting the MZO).

Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022

- Politicization of the municipal public service and dismantling of its objectivity and ‘expert’ role in supporting Council decision-making through the assignment of CAO powers to Mayor; the hiring and firing of senior staff (CAO, Chief Planner, etc.); and the ability to change the organizational structure and give direction to municipal staff.
- Polarization of Council through use of the veto, appointment powers and the changed relationship with staff.
- Undermine Councillors ability to fulfill their representational role and responsibility.
- Undermine the ability of the Mayor to represent the community if they implement “provincial priorities.”

Implications and Risks for Municipalities (2/2)

Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

- **Reduced municipal revenues to fund infrastructure:** The reduction of development-related charges and fees will have a significant impact on municipalities' ability to fund growth-related infrastructure. With limited revenue tools, funding would need to come from the property tax base (shifting the burden of development to existing taxpayers and ratepayers) or service cuts, unless the province offers a new funding source. This is likely to exacerbate the current, known gaps in DC funding capacity and weaken municipalities' financial stability. AMO's preliminary analysis of the Bill estimates that municipalities would lose \$5.1B in funding over the next 9 years, without any assurances of improved housing affordability. In addition, the Bill places increased emphasis on intensification and density, which will lead to the need for more green space and community amenities, and yet reduces the funding tools designed to enable those amenities.
- **Reduced capacity for regional/county coordination and service planning:** The residual role in planning for upper-tier government is not yet clear. Lower-tier municipalities may need to build in regional planning expertise and staff capacity, at a time when filling planning staff vacancies is a challenge across the sector. In addition, it is possible that the loss of coordination between the tiers could lead to inadvertent delays in the planning and approvals process.

Bill 39, Better Municipal Governance Act, 2022

- **Review of regional governments:** The province has stated that reassessment of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo and York Region is intended to ensure the right mix of roles and responsibilities to be able to tackle the housing crisis and support the expansion of Strong Mayors to other Ontario municipalities. Restructuring of some regions may also be a possibility, with the Mayors of Brampton and Mississauga in Peel – advocates of single-tier status for their municipalities – expressing support for changes to regional government ahead of Minister Clark's announcement on November 16.
- **Additional Strong Mayor powers:** Mayors in Toronto and Ottawa would be able to propose and amend bylaws related to provincial priorities (related to housing and related infrastructure – for now) and enable Council to pass them with a vote of one-third of its members. Some commentators have suggested that this measure would amount to legislated minority rule and undermines the fundamental principles and design of democratic government, in which decisions are made by a majority in an elected assembly, not a minority.

Overview: The Uncertain Future of Municipal Finance

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities were generally fiscally healthy, and characterized by:

- ✓ Balanced operating budgets (as required by the Municipal Act).
- ✓ Modest property tax increases (at or less than the rate of inflation) and small tax arrears.
- ✓ Expenditures increasing at around the rate of inflation.
- ✓ Borrowing for capital by-and-large within provincial limits.

But fiscal health may have come at the expense of the overall health of municipalities, leading to deteriorating services and infrastructure, even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead to the next decade, there are several issues that will challenge municipal fiscal sustainability, in addition to those issues brought on by the pandemic and recent provincial legislation that will limit some of the funding tools available to municipalities.

Looking Ahead: Key Challenges for Municipal Budgets



Aging population: As the number of seniors increases, municipal expenditures related to public health and long-term care will grow. There will also likely be expenses related to ensuring transportation and community facilities are accessible.



Infrastructure deficit: In 2021, the FAO estimated that 45% of Ontario municipal infrastructure is not in a state of good repair. The total infrastructure backlog of Ontario municipalities was \$52B, with roads and bridges in the worst shape of all. Municipalities need to make more capital expenditures than before and look at new revenue sources to pay for capital.



Climate policy: In the absence of adaptation, climate hazards will increase the costs of maintaining Ontario's transportation infrastructure by \$1.5B in the next decade beyond what would have been required in a stable climate. This will add significant cost pressures for municipalities, which own 82% of roads. Further, as a major source of GHGs, municipalities must advance aggressive reduction efforts through facility retrofits, cleaner transportation systems, etc. The estimated required annual investment in municipal infrastructure and local adaptation is in the order of \$5.3B.

The Uncertain Future of Municipal Finance: COVID-19 Impacts

Ontario's municipal sector continues to contend with the financial impacts of the pandemic. While municipalities were generally able to remain financially stable in 2020 and 2021 due to funding relief from the other levels of government, the longer-term outlook is less optimistic, especially given the uncertain ramifications that provincial legislative changes may have on municipal budgets.

Funding supports from other governments: Municipalities were hit hard by the pandemic, particularly those with transit systems which saw ridership and revenues decline by 85%. While the provincial-federal Safe Restart Agreement blunted the worst impacts for municipalities in 2020, there have been no government commitments made for emergency funding programs for municipalities for 2022 and beyond, leading to several municipalities, including Guelph, to have to defer projects, mitigate expenses, reduce services, or tap into reserves to offset the shortfall due to continued COVID-related impacts in 2022 and beyond.

Service provision: Municipalities are now at the stage where they are deciding what of the COVID response stays and what should be rolled back in terms of services and service levels. The City of Toronto plans to reduce the distance between beds in congregate shelters back to 1.25 meters (from 2m during the pandemic) to increase capacity in its shelter system. But other programs and services may become a permanent fixture, and municipalities will need to think about how to accommodate these within the budget allocations outside of an emergency context – patio programs, for example, which allowed restaurants, bars, and cafes to create patios on sidewalks and roads and in parking spots during the height of the pandemic, often with waived administrative and permit fees. In the case of Guelph, the 2022/23 budget reflected permanent changes to City service levels resulting from the pandemic.

Shift from bricks and mortar: While it is unclear what trends accelerated by the pandemic will outlast it in the long run, municipalities are having to grapple with understanding and addressing the financial impacts of these unknowns. For example, if there is a long-term aggregate reduction in demand for office-space as a result of remote working or in commercial space as retailers close their storefronts in favour of an online presence, there could be a marked erosion of the commercial and office portion of non-residential property taxes for municipalities.

“Difficult Days Ahead”: Ontario and Canada’s Economic Outlook

Heading into their 2023 budget processes, municipalities must address not only continued pandemic impacts but also an inflationary crisis and rising interest rates. For many Ontario municipalities, the next several budget cycles will be challenging, and elected officials will be required to make difficult choices about their services and how to fund them.

Inflation, a Looming Recession and the Affordability Crisis

Inflation has skyrocketed to its highest levels in over 40 years. As of fall 2022, the rate currently sits at 6.9%; the targeted rate is 2%. Some of the hardest-hit goods include housing and building materials, food and groceries, and energy.

To combat rising inflation, the Bank of Canada began **raising the key interest rate earlier this year.** At the time of this report, the central lending rate was 3.75%, up from 0.25% earlier this year. Throughout 2019, the rate was 1.75%. Experts anticipate the rate increasing by another 0.5-0.75% by year’s end.

The increase in interest rates has **tested the limits of both individuals and organizations,** especially those with variable rate mortgages.

The present economic uncertainty has created fear of a recession, with federal Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland warning of “difficult days ahead” and experts forecasting a **70% chance of a recession in early 2023.**

More Fiscal Pressures Ahead for Municipalities

- Cost of goods and services have increased, including construction costs for capital projects.
- Higher borrowing costs further reduce municipalities’ capacity to finance capital work.
- Municipalities have limited revenue tools and are required to balance their annual operating budgets.
- Funding growth-related infrastructure is also set to become more challenging due to Bill 23.

As a result, municipalities may need a “higher than usual” property tax increase just to fund the same services as last year. The challenge is that they will be looking to residents to pay more precisely when it is hardest for them to do so.

Municipalities and the Federal Government

Ontario municipalities play a unique role in service delivery and have an outsized place when it comes to being part of the solution on major federal issues like housing supply and affordability and climate sustainability. While there may be strong policy alignment between the sector and federal government in some areas, the reality is the two levels of government operate in fundamentally different ways, with respect to governance and funding.

- As noted above, municipalities continue to struggle with a mismatch between their responsibilities and revenues – a reality exacerbated by the continuing impact of COVID-19 – and have increasingly turned their heads towards the federal government for supports.
- While the federal government has come through on COVID-19 relief for municipalities earlier in the pandemic and more recently with interim transit support in February 2022, there have been increasing calls for greater federal engagement from Ontario’s leading municipal associations and major urban centres on key municipal issues: housing affordability, homelessness, mental health and addictions, immigration and refugee resettlement, gun violence, and public safety.
- Overall, the Trudeau Liberals have built a stronger relationship with municipalities than previous federal governments. But, at the same time, municipalities should not expect a direct cash infusion from the federal government – the distinctiveness and urgency of the pandemic response should not be misread as a rewriting of the municipal-federal relationship.
- Municipalities will need to continue to advocate for their “fair share” of Canadian taxpayer’s dollars, while also emphasizing how they can support the Liberal agenda on housing, affordability, and climate change.

Importance of municipal needs may be growing at the federal level. 2022 advanced several investments that will benefit Ontario municipalities:



\$10/day childcare



\$4B Housing Accelerator Fund and Rapid Housing Initiative



\$3B in permanent public transit funding

... and there may be more to come with mounting pressure on the federal government to act on the housing file.

5. Key Considerations and Recommendations

Preliminary Recommendations for Guelph (1/2)

Based on the internal and external environmental scan outlined in the prior pages, several considerations and recommendations have been identified for the City's consideration as it refreshes its Strategic Plan and develops action plans as to how best its vision for the future of the community. **At this time, these recommendations are high-level and preliminary, given the limited scope of this scan. Many underscore the importance of initiatives already underway at the City and continuing to invest and appropriately resource these projects.**

- **Continue to prioritize long-term financial planning:** The City has an existing Long-term Financial Framework focused on supporting the sustainability and health of the City's financial position. In view of high inflation and borrowing rates, the City may want to pursue an update of the framework to ensure that the City can effectively navigate a volatile economic landscape and appropriately manage risk with minimal impacts on operating or capital budgets. In addition, the City has or is in the process of completing several overarching strategies and plans (e.g., the Transportation Master Plan, Climate Action Plan) that will have significant funding envelopes (particularly spending on capital) in terms of implementation. Finally, focusing on robust long-term financial planning is also critical in view of changing provincial legislation that will bring about funding gaps for the City to advance growth-related infrastructure.
- **Focus on human resources:** Given existing human resources constraints at all levels of the Corporation and the broader challenge facing the municipal sector to attract and retain staff, Guelph should review its human resources policies and strategies (including recruitment and retention) to ensure that it can continue to be an attractive and competitive employer. Staff are critical to the City being able to deliver the services it already provides and to advancing the organization on its strategic path forward.
- **Continue to advance progress on asset management and address State-of-Good-Repair:** Like many municipalities, the City has a sizeable backlog of capital projects. It is critical that the City continue to make progress on capital projects, per the asset management plan, and to avoid deferrals and delays wherever possible, although this may, to some extent, also be out of the City's control given supply chain issues and labour shortages. As noted above, proactive infrastructure investment can reduce costs in the longer run and contribute to the resiliency and sustainability of that infrastructure to better withstand the impact of climate change.

Preliminary Recommendations for Guelph (2/2)

- **Education on municipal roles and responsibilities:** In 2021, the City retained KPMG to conduct a Service Rationalization Review. While staff have started addressing the recommendations, broader education and training for both Council and the public as to what is ‘core’ to Guelph (i.e., what services the municipality directly provides versus other partners) may be useful. Throughout the consultation process for the Strategic Plan refresh, it has been observed that Council and the public continue to want the City to deliver programs and services to address key community challenges (such as affordable and social housing; homelessness; food insecurity, etc.) that are beyond the ‘span of control’ and funding capacity of the Corporation. This may also be an opportunity to highlight the City’s extensive partnership and advocacy efforts to address these community priorities.
- **Continue to advance advocacy and partnerships to address homelessness, mental health and addictions:** Related to the above point, challenges around social inequities and related issues are not unique to the City of Guelph but are major concerns in municipalities small and large across Ontario. The City should continue to build effective working relationships with its community and County partners to help support vulnerable community members while also continuing its advocacy efforts for a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach with the provincial and federal governments to tackling these social challenges. Guelph should continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and associations in these advocacy efforts, in addition to executing its own intergovernmental relations strategy.
- **Greater focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** As Guelph continues to grow, there is a need for an added focus on ensuring an EDI and accessibility lens to how the City delivers services and engages with residents. The Corporation has an internal-facing Diversity and Inclusion Plan but may also benefit from the creation of a community-based EDI strategy to help guide the organization in advancing equity for equity-deserving groups. Doing so will also help ensuring that Guelph, as it grows over time and brings in new members of the community, continues to be an inclusive City that strives to reduce barriers to accessing to local services and engaging in local government.

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Engagement Process

In October-November 2022, StrategyCorp facilitated an initial cycle of direct staff engagement as part of the Strategic Plan Refresh:



Executive Team
Interviews (4) -
Virtual



Strategic Pillar
Focus Groups (5) -
Virtual



Executive Team
Workshop
In-person

The following summary report outlines what we heard in two key areas:

1. **On the current and refreshed Strategic Plan**, including strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities to improve upon the foundation set by *Guelph. Future Ready. 2019-2023*.
2. **Specific feedback on each Strategic Pillar**, including key successes and challenges in the previous term of Council, and input on what should be in the refreshed Plan.

Strategic Plan – Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

Strengths

- **Strong resonance & credibility within the administration:** From the perspective of senior management, Guelph’s Strategic Plan has “street cred.” It means something and matters within the organization. The Plan is a foundational document that has been well-communicated to staff, and it is kept in the foreground of the City’s operations and business planning.
- **The “right” priorities:** The existing Plan generally includes the right priorities and focus areas – these should be updated in terms of the activities that will make them ‘real’ over the next four years, but the pillars themselves still resonate.
- **Usable, while enabling flexibility:** “Clear,” “concise.” The Plan is broad enough to leave room for staff to pursue opportunities as they arise and navigate departmental initiatives and priorities. A key example was the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, which pushed the organization to be innovative to meet and support a variety of business lines out of necessity.
- **Cross-functionality and silo-busting:** Many staff see their work cut across multiple pillars, which builds cross-functionality across the organization and can facilitate support across service areas. This perspective also informs the MYB process, which is organized by priority area.
- **The City saw major achievements coming out of the Plan:** All the strategic pillars have demonstrable successes, including the advancement of the circular economy, a focus on economic development and tourism, the establishment of the MYB process, and work to refine the City’s system of performance measurement, evaluation, and reporting, among many other achievements.

Weaknesses

- **Big conversations and ideas – too big?** The previous strategic planning process focused on big, bold and ambitious goals, but lacked specifics as to how the City plans to get there. In addition, Council wants to tackle the big issues impacting their community (e.g., roots of mental health & addictions) – but where is the line in terms of what the municipality can do/deliver vs. advocate for/support?
- **Plan not consistently used by Council:** While some of Council tried to “stick to the Plan,” there is also a sense that the Strategic Plan is more of a staff document and that there was not strong Council buy-in or ownership over the Plan.
- **Council actions inconsistent with Plan (1) – policy choices:** The bold goals are sometimes at odds with day-to-day policy directions from Council (e.g., the Plan committed to carbon footprint reduction, but Council still focused on parking, traffic & congestion, grass cutting etc.). This raises questions of whether the stated goal really reflects their priority.
- **Council actions inconsistent with Plan (2) – funding allocations:** Several objectives and initiatives fell short because they were not appropriately resourced. Capacity is a key factor that needs to be considered when objective-setting.
- **Budget alignment is a work in progress:** MYB is shifting to align with the Strategic Plan in terms of organization by pillar... but on the back end, it is still starting from a service area perspective.
- **Internal-facing priorities are sometimes given short shrift:** Some pillars are less of a focus for Council than others that have more direct outward facing impacts and yet the initiatives within the corporate-facing pillar are key to enabling the other pillars.
- **Not all staff “see themselves” in the Plan:** For some frontline staff, it is challenging to show how their day-to-day work is reflected and connected to the City’s strategic priorities.
- **Strategic Plan horizon:** Some projects will stretch far beyond a four-year term of Council, meaning there must be appropriate performance targets and indicators to be able to demonstrate progress.

Opportunities for the Refreshed Strategic Plan

- **Be specific in the Strategic Plan:** Don't leave anything in the Plan that is vague enough to allow for multiple interpretations. There needs to be the right balance between precision in terms of what the City plans to do and flexibility in how it gets there.
- **Engage Council to build ownership and fidelity into the refreshed Plan:** The 2022-23 strategic planning process is an opportunity to reaffirm the value of strategic planning and Council's role in setting the strategic direction vs. "making it real" (i.e., steer, don't row). Council should be directly engaged throughout the process, so they have confidence in the Plan, feel that it appropriately reflects their priorities (vs. being a "staff plan") and are more likely to adhere to it.
- **Governance & leadership:** Engage and empower Council to focus on outcomes, not the process, and its role as a strategic Board of Governors.
- **Be transparent about what is required to deliver on the Plan:** To rein in the 'blue sky' or big ideas, be clear about what the capacity, financial and timeline requirements are to do what Council wants. Support them in making informed decisions through communications and reporting.
- **The City can't do everything or be all things to all people:** There may be opportunities for Guelph to build on its brand or areas where it is "punching above its weight" (e.g., circular economy) but it can't do it all. Assess what is possible over 4 years.
- **Continue to align the Strategic Plan to the budget:** The MYB is the "accelerator pedal" to actioning the Strategic Plan, and it provides the vehicle for Council to have a say in and support operationalizing it.
- **Build in a EDI-focus and/or lens:** Equity, diversity and inclusion should be a focus of and throughout the refreshed Plan. This aligns with the focus on community and belonging in the existing Strategic Plan.
- **Continue to build staff representation and buy-in (beyond leadership/management):** Ensure that the Plan touches on all service areas – this can highlight the work people are doing and their role in helping Guelph achieve its strategic vision.
- **Human Resources:** The refreshed Plan should include some focus on human resources as integral to the organization, including staff attraction, retention, engagement, and development.

Guelph's Operating Environment – PESTEL Inputs

Political Factors

- Guelph is in transition from “town” to “big City” and still wants to hold onto its “town” roots (e.g., focused on congestion, parking, low taxes, staff efficiencies) – but this may be constraining its ability to embrace being a high growth, diversified community and the resulting benefits.
- New members of Council this term, which may be an opportunity to revisit and refresh how to communicate and engage them in the Strategic Plan to support buy-in.
 - Need to understand what the priorities of incoming Councillors are and the areas they would like to focus on over the next four years.
- Shifting priorities of Council
 - Attraction to bold, exciting, new ideas; and
 - Overcommitment to what is achievable based on resources and capacity in the organization.
- Potential expansion of Strong Mayor powers by the province and potential impacts on the budget, hiring of management staff, etc.
- Provincial priorities and legislative/policy impact on Guelph (e.g., *More Homes Built Faster Act*, *Better Municipal Governance Act*).

Economic Factors

- Inflation: tied to affordability and attainability in the community and Corporation.
 - Need rental housing to support employment base, otherwise will see sizable shift.
 - Continuing supply chain issues.
- Risk of economic recession – uncertain for how long or how bad? Who will be impacted?
- Municipal financial challenges:
 - Impact of COVID and reduced revenues (e.g., transit ridership not at pre-COVID levels);
 - Impacts of provincial limits on growth funding tools (DC, CBC, s. 42 Parkland Charges) on infrastructure to meet growth; and
 - SOGR backlog - \$289M.
- Guelph has done well with growth management – went up, not out. However, there is a need to keep pace with expansion in terms of infrastructure, business attraction and retention, availability of employment lands etc.
- Impact of remote work and impact on local economic development (e.g., commercial space, downtown vibrancy).
- Potential GO expansion.
- Town-and-gown effect: Benefits of a strong University of Guelph presence and expected growth with Conestoga College, but also housing challenges (students drive up costs for local workforce).
- City real estate – need a clear plan or strategy regarding the City’s land holdings.
- Areas of focus moving forward: downtown, sectoral business success (tying this into Powering Our Future).

Social Factors

- Increase in cost of living and affordability concerns in the community (e.g., food prices, interest rates, rents, etc.).
- Shifting demographics – aging population and impacts to services, infrastructure, etc.
- Community need for affordable and social housing (end homelessness through housing) – but there are more requests for financial support than the City can fund through the budget/reserves.
- Mental health and addictions crisis and interrelationship with other needs such as housing, food, counselling, primary health care, etc.
- Impact of social pressures on the downtown, and economic development (including small businesses).
- Growing diversity of community, and the need for policies that focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, both in the organization and in the community.
 - Spatial growth in the community: How can the City serve residents with equity, regardless of geography?
- Town-and-gown impact: Post-secondary education partners can be leveraged for community development.
 - The Conestoga College campus expansion – what will this mean for the local labour market and access to post-secondary education?

Technological Factors

- Significant advancement in this area within the Corporation – but should continue to go further:
 - Modernization of customer service, digital communications, etc.
- Guelph as an “innovation corridor.” What will this look like in four years?
- What does “Smart Cities” mean for Guelph? For example, is it just technology? Is it more about future-readiness than purely technology?
- Remote/hybrid work.
- Potential impact of driverless vehicles.
- Potential expansion of GO Transit.
- Cybersecurity.

Environmental Factors

- Organization is uniquely climate aware – more so than many municipalities – which enables good alignment with the federal government for funding.
- Corporate sustainability – opportunity for climate as the compass in the organization?
 - Will this change how the City delivers select public services?
- Extension of climate change strategy/action into the community.
 - How to bring about/incentivize behavioural change?
- Competing priorities/policies at the City – focused on sustainability and climate change mitigation but how to reconcile with day-to-day operations and concerns.
 - For example, balancing active transportation plans with concerns about parking; seeking to reduce carbon footprint while still lighting community facilities, grass cutting, etc.
- Transit and active transportation to support climate action, sustainability in the community.

Legal Factors

- Risk management.
- Joint and several liability.
- Changes to provincial tribunals and administrative legal bodies like the OLT, stemming from provincial governance and land use planning changes.
- Changes to human resources processes if strong mayor powers are expanded to the City of Guelph.

The Strategic Pillars

Powering our Future (1/2) – Overall Insights



- **Key achievements unlocked during this term of Council include:**
 - Circular economy initiatives, including special projects supported with federal funding. The City should continue to advance these initiatives as part of its brand and differentiator.
 - Economic development closely aligned to this pillar. Staff developed the Economic Development & Tourism Strategy, which will set the tone for the next 5 years and can inform/define economic development's role in the refreshed Strategic Plan.
 - Realization and continuation of important partnerships – with post-secondary education institutions, non-profit organizations, etc. Need to ensure Guelph continues to be a “living lab.”
- **COVID was a real challenge... and more challenges are on the horizon:**
 - Initiatives on workforce development were stymied by the pandemic; however, given current staffing challenges and concerns in the municipal sector and beyond, workforce development must be a focus.
 - Economic development was front and centre in being a resource and advocate for local businesses – this is likely to need to be the case in the coming months with the looming recession.
- **Triple bottom line is coming:**
 - The City should proactively prepare for and work to integrate the triple bottom line into future planning for the City.
- **How to fund the Strategic Plan:**
 - Need to think about innovative ways to fund what is in the Plan beyond property tax. What opportunities exist for different revenue streams, collaborations, or sponsorships?

Powering our Future (2/2) – How this Pillar Should Evolve



- **Better articulation of linkages between infrastructure and economic development:** Current pillar is missing connectivity to the City’s asset management plan (e.g., need servicing and assets to grow and attract businesses).
- **Supporting business success:** Should be a focus in the new plan – how can Guelph be a place where businesses succeed? How can we leverage our community? Where should we be focusing? How can we better partner and hear from businesses (beyond the “usual suspects”)? City could do a better job at building a two-way dialogue with businesses and identifying the value proposition for businesses and, in turn, better understanding what they need to succeed.
- **Community partnerships:** Guelph could more closely consider its relationships, and potential partnerships, with community groups; there is an opportunity to better understand the unique ways in which they serve and enhance the community.
- **Downtown needs a “home” in the refreshed strategic plan:** Build on the work done during the last few years to support businesses and the master planning exercise to think about what the downtown should look like.
- **Connections to housing affordability and supply:** Challenges in housing supply and affordability, particularly rental housing, could decimate the local workforce if people cannot afford to live where they work.
- **Linkages to climate change:** Opportunity for climate to be the guiding compass of the organization.
- **Smart Cities needs clarity:** This is beyond technology and is about building the City of Tomorrow - resilient, healthy, future-focused.
- **Leverage Economic Development and Tourism Strategy:** Draw on elements and language mimicking economic development and tourism strategy (e.g., priority sectors and clusters where Guelph has competitive edge).
- **Innovation corridor:** Should remain in the refreshed Strategic Plan but need to think about what to do here.

Sustaining our Future (1/2) – Overall Insights



- **Several achievements realized during this term of Council:**
 - Expanding tree canopy (development of policies, tree plantings increasing).
 - Approaching completion of the climate adaptation plan.
- **Not all services align with pillar:**
 - For example, if the City mowed green spaces less, this would help advance the goal of reducing Guelph’s carbon footprint but there has been no change to the service level.
 - Is this a policy conflict? Or a sign that the City is in transition?
- **The Strategic Plan’s horizon is challenging for this pillar:**
 - Many of the broad objectives/initiatives extend well beyond a four-year term of Council (e.g., reducing Guelph’s energy footprint through retrofits).
- **Organizational structure lens:**
 - Not all staff see how their role/work is reflected in the Plan (e.g., frontline staff, program managers).
 - Are there activities/initiatives the team is undertaking that support the pillar and its objectives? How could these efforts be better or more clearly conveyed this through the plan?
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:**
 - EDI should be more explicitly incorporated and/or reflected in the refreshed Strategic Plan.
- **Pillar scope:**
 - Is this pillar focused on sustainability and climate change mitigation in the Corporation or in the community as well?

Sustaining our Future (2/2) – How this Pillar Should Evolve



- **Some of the objectives are BIG statements:** For example, “Mitigate climate change” is a very ambitious goal. The deliverable itself is the challenge – What specific actions will the City take to realize this goal and what integration/cohesion/alignment is required across the organization to move the dial on climate change?
- **The Guelph “brand”:** How green is Guelph really? How green does it want to be? Focus on the environment is perceived as a central element to Guelph’s identity – but how ‘real’ is this and how can it be balanced against everything else that the City wants and/or needs to do
- **Time to evolve Sustaining?** May be the right time to shift focus and build in new priorities in this pillar and move on from what is completed or underway (in the implementation phase)
- **Sustainable City:** Regarding the objective “Plan and design an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows”, are these just policy directions? What else is need to build a sustainable City and how can we link to the Sustainable Cities Master Plan and build in the climate adaptation plan.
- **Asset management plan:** Need to articulate a stronger focus on asset management. There are big dollars here and key ties to infrastructure, community safety and the climate adaptation plan (through infrastructure investment)



Navigating our Future (1/2) – Overall Insights

- **Very expensive pillar:**
 - Objectives and initiatives within this pillar have a high price tag, and staff have been trying to make progress with limited resources (e.g., adopting clean tech).
- **Pillar saw some significant achievements over the last 4 years:**
 - Two major strategies completed: Transportation Master Plan and the 10-Year Guelph Future Ready Transit Action Plan.
 - Advancement of initiatives on road safety (including from EDI lens), cycling.
 - Many initiatives are ongoing – this is a living pillar.
- **Chronic staff shortages limited the ability to drive some initiatives forward:**
 - Little or limited capacity among staff – “get to it when we can.”
 - Investment in workforce (at all levels, from operations to management) is critical to be able to deliver on the Plan and, correspondingly, to the Strategic Plan Refresh.
- **The Action Plan is a useful document that helps make the Strategic Plan real:**
 - It outlines the work to be done to support implementation.
 - Need to be realistic about what we can achieve.
- **Gap between internal vs. resident-facing services:**
 - Resident-facing services find ways to grow, and the teams that get left behind are ‘back office’ – HR, IT, Finance. But these service areas critical to implementation.
- **Communication of Strategic Plan matters:**
 - Keeping Council informed is key, and there is a need to find a way to communicate the Strategic Plan and its value more broadly beyond an annual update.
- **Objectives could be more outcomes-focused.**

Navigating our Future (2/2) – How this Pillar Should Evolve



- **Need for greater clarity:** For example, improving local transportation and regional transit connectivity are two separate things and the refreshed Plan should be more clear-cut in this regard.
- **Leverage the work and planning done in the last term of Council:** The TMP is now completed, which includes clear direction that should be reflected in the refreshed Plan.
- **Active transportation, parks and trails:** These need a bigger focus in the refreshed Plan, as they are part of the dialogue on transportation, mobility, and network connectivity.
- **Opportunity for community support?** The community may be a useful resource as the City looks to make difficult, longer-term choices. For example, the Transit Advisory Committee could become the Active Transportation Committee to help the City “get it right.”



Working Together for our Future (1/2) – Overall Insights

- **Pillar saw several key achievements this term of Council:**
 - Significant advances in measurement, evaluation, and reporting.
 - Established multi-year budgeting.
 - Strides in technological advancement of the organization.
- **Pillar is less directly public-facing than the others, which may be impacting how it is viewed within the organization and outside of it:**
 - As a result, Council has tendency to focus less on this pillar – yet it is internally focused for public benefit.
 - Need to better articulate the impact of what staff do internally to the organization and communicate successes; it is also important to highlight the importance of this pillar to realizing the rest of the Plan.
- **Yard stick perhaps hasn't moved as much as other pillars:** This may be due to underestimating the resources needed to support delivery of related initiatives.
- **Need to better inform Council of the impacts/consequences of their decision-making:**
 - Be explicit: “If you do X, we won't achieve Y.”
- **Too much use of the word 'and':**
 - Big ideas have sometimes been grouped together when they probably shouldn't be.

Working Together for our Future (2/2) - How this Pillar Should Evolve



- **Working Together as foundational?** This pillar is critical to realizing the other 4 pillars. How could we better build the case for Council support for the initiatives within this pillar? E.g., through improved reporting or communication of staff impacts and requirements as a result of Council decisions?
- **Need more clarity and specifics in terms of the objectives and bullet points:**
 - Too much is left up to interpretation.
 - Plan needs to be clear on what it being committed to to avoid connecting big initiatives together.
- **Customer service modernization:** Continue to advance this forward and build on work to date.
- **Communications plan:** Build in the 5-year communications plan and digital communications work.
- **Long-term financial framework:** Staff continuing to implement this as there is still work to be done due to staff capacity constraints.
- **Human resources focus:** Refreshed Plan should highlight staff recruitment and retention to ensure Guelph is competitive in the marketplace and continues to be an Employer of Choice. Could also leverage the Capital Resource Strategy in terms of how to mobilize people efficiently to support broader process improvement and customer service modernization initiatives.
- **Continuous improvement:** Continue to advance project management innovation.
- **Strategic real estate:** What are we doing with our holdings?
- **IT, risk management, emergency planning:** all should have a home in the refreshed Plan, especially given the experience of COVID-19 and ensuring business continuity and security.

Building our Future (1/2) – Overall Insights



- **Council is very interested and committed to this pillar:** This pillar is focused on frontline services and is what the public focuses on when they think about municipal government and its responsibilities.
- **There may be too much on the City’s plate:**
 - Council is well-intentioned in their drive to address significant social challenges faced by the community (e.g., root causes of mental health and addictions).
 - But where is the line drawn in terms of what the municipality can do/deliver vs. advocate for/support? Need some education / level-setting in terms of what they can and cannot do (spheres of jurisdiction).
- **The City takes too much on and tries to “do it all”:**
 - Moving forward, it must identify where it can support vs. lead.
 - May need to scale back some of the ambition (e.g., can/should we bring on new community assets given new provincial priorities?).
- **Need stronger Council alignment with the Plan:**
 - There is not as much buy-in as there should be. Council is sometimes reluctant to make the investments required to deliver on priorities. Council should have a clear understanding of what they are approving and the associated staff and budget impacts – need to think more about how we communicate this to them.
 - In some respects, this pillar is at odds with the financial management piece in *Working Together* – can’t fulfill the mandate of this pillar without appropriate funding.
- **Refreshed pillar will need to reflect ‘new world order’:**
 - Such as post-COVID realities, municipal financial constraints, and provincial priorities/announcements/legislation (e.g., Bill 23).
- **Housing supply and affordability should still be a key focus in the Plan:** This is the new “net zero” of this term of Council.
 - The objectives and initiatives should be adjusted to reflect current realities (e.g., advocacy may no longer suffice).
 - City needs to clearly understand and define its role (neither developer nor social service provider) and be realistic about what it can achieve.

Building our Future (2/2) – How this Pillar Should Evolve



- **Different takes on the level of specificity that should be in the Strategic Plan:**
 - Some observed all the objectives were “transferable” to the refreshed Plan.
 - Others suggested the objectives could be refined as they are “too rolled up” for some service delivery departments to see their roles reflected.
 - Some observed that objectives can lack clarity (e.g., what does “creating greater impact by aligning our efforts with local and provincial partners” mean?).
 - Should “managing our infrastructure” be fleshed out? Want to ensure that all who use this document understand the impact of what the City is doing and working towards (such as O&M, replacement, etc.).
- **Better define what the City will/can do on housing:** Need to better articulate “who does what” on housing to Council and then work with Council to understand and define what the City will take on as well as targets based on desired outcomes.
- **Fire/paramedic services:** Mitigation and education is missing .
- **Healthcare:** Should also be a priority moving forward, as the City parses out what is partially funded by the province vs. what Guelph is responsible for.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Opportunity with the refresh and need for EDI to have a bigger role across the Plan and within this pillar.
- **Opportunity to clarify and build in more of what is meant by “landmark beauty”:** Can connections between different initiatives that work towards this goal be made more explicit? E.g., public art and culture and urban design exist under here.

Appendix A: Executive Team Interview Questions

The City's Current and Future Strategic Plans

1. What do you like about the City's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, and why?
 2. What would you like to see improved in the refreshed Plan?
-

The City's Operating Environment

3. What do you see as the City's strengths? What does it do well? *(Consider both the Corporation as well as the community)*
4. What areas exist for improvement?
5. Are there any opportunities that the City should take advantage of over the next 5-10 years?
6. What are some of the threats facing the City that it must plan for and address through its Strategic Plan?
7. Of everything we have talked about, is there one priority that stands out as being the most important in your opinion?
8. Finally, are there any other ideas or areas of focus that should be considered as part of the refreshed Plan?

Appendix B: Discussion Questions for Pillar Focus Groups

The Strategic Plan as a Whole:

- What do you like about your existing Strategic Plan?
 - Where do you think there may be opportunities for improvement?
-

Reflecting on the Current Plan:

- Where do you feel the City made key strides in terms of the strategic objectives and initiatives within this pillar?
 - Were there any initiatives or projects that the City was unable to deliver on?
-

Looking Ahead:

- What's top of mind for you when you think about this pillar as we enter 2023? What, if anything, has changed in the community (or the Corporation) since the last strategic planning process?
- What objectives and/or initiatives in the current plan should we carry forward? Where do we need to refine/adjust? Is there anything missing?

Appendix C: Agenda for ET and CMT Workshops

ITEM	TIMING
1. Introductions / Workshop Objectives	5 MIN
2. Current and Refreshed Strategic Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, validate and/or refine strengths, weaknesses and opportunities 	40 MIN
BREAK	10 MIN
3. Guelph's Operating Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify inputs for the PESTEL analysis 	40 MIN
BREAK	10 MIN
4. Strategic Change Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, reflect on and update existing pillars and objectives to understand the desired future state 	70 MIN
5. Next Steps	5 MIN

●●● Appendix D: Staff Survey – Detailed Outputs

Staff Survey Overview & Highlights

Communications & Outreach

- The survey was sent out from the CAO's office and was also communicated in service area meetings.

Timeframe

- The survey was left open for two weeks, with prompts sent to staff to maintain awareness and encourage participation.

Staff Response

- 232 responses were received in total, with representation from all four service areas.

Key Survey Highlights



Sustaining (90%) and **Working Together** (88%) were ranked highest in terms of continued resonance for the refreshed Strategic Plan, although all scored high overall.

35%

consider **Sustaining to be the City's most important priority** area in the future, although **19% considered all five pillars as equally critical.**



80% of respondents **are familiar with the existing Strategic Plan and understand how their job relates to the Plan**, although **40% indicated they don't use it often** in their day-to-day work.

44% of employees who worked at the City during the development of the current Strategic Plan **did not feel they were engaged in the process.**



69% **feel the Plan reflects corporate priorities**, versus community (57%) or Council (41%) priorities.

59%

think the current Strategic Plan is **easy to follow.**

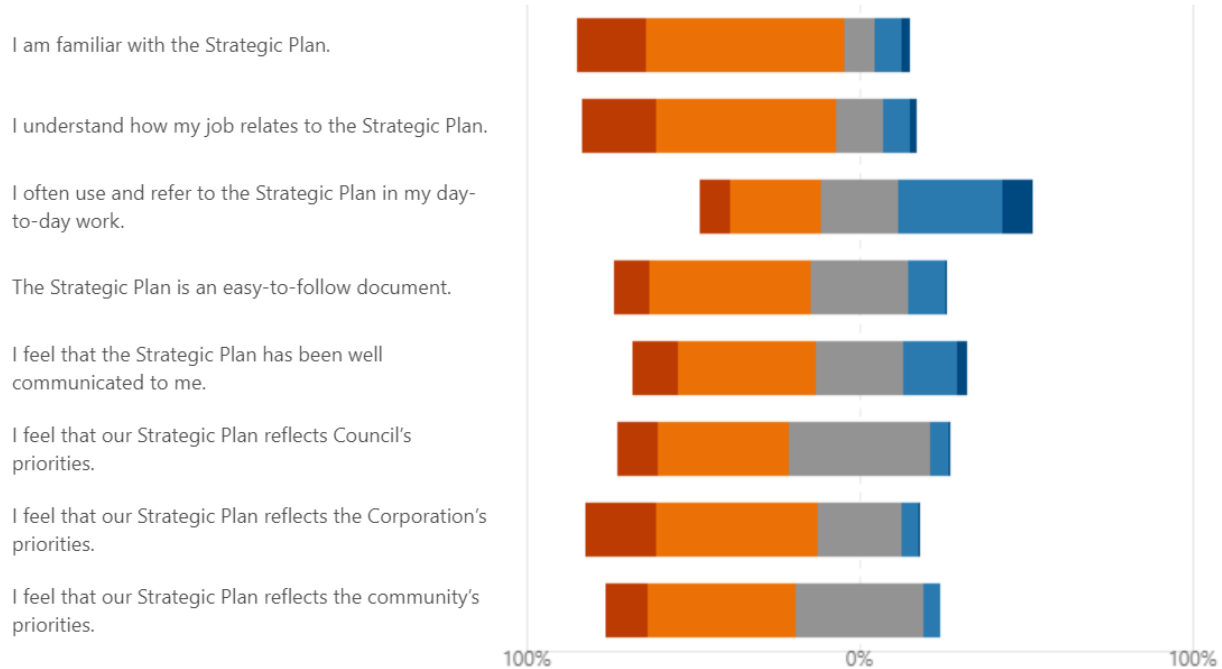
58% of employees who responded to the survey also live in Guelph, giving them a dual perspective as both public servants and members of the community.



Nearly **1/2** of respondents work in **Infrastructure Services**, followed by Public Services (27%), with **46% having worked for the City for less than 4 years.**

Q1. For each of the following statements, please state whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree



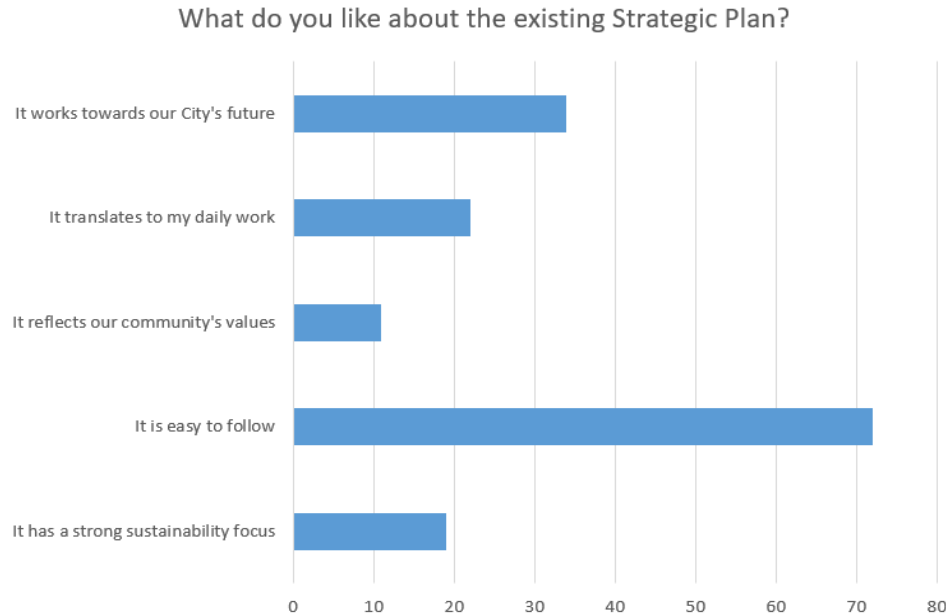
Q2. To what degree were you involved and engaged in the strategic planning process for the City's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan: Guelph. Future Ready?

● Highly involved and engaged	24
● Somewhat involved and enga...	58
● Not involved and engaged	67
● I was not employed by the Cit...	76
● Other	5



Q3. What do you like about the City's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan?

This question received 182 responses. Responses have been largely coded into key themes.



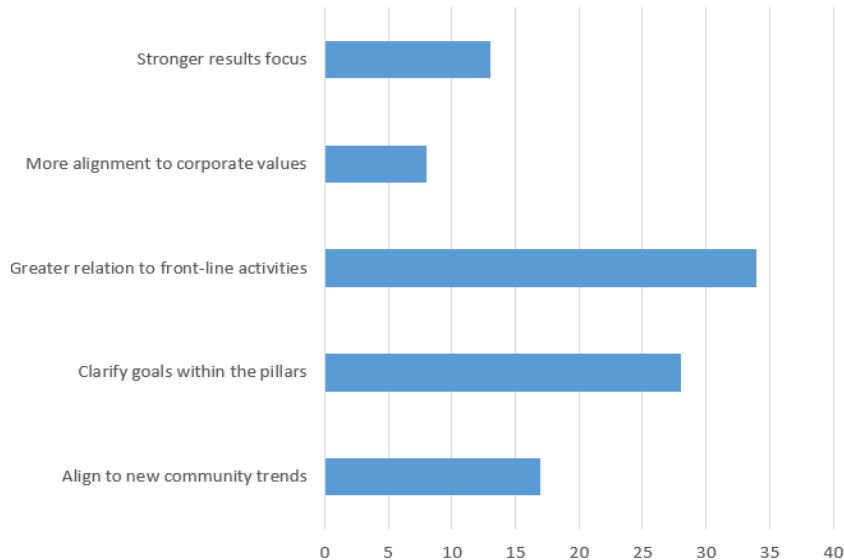
Sample Quotes from Q3

- “I like that the City has taken an inclusive direction that not only includes residents and visitors, but to also take those plans and goals and see how they best work to promote a clean and healthy environment.”
- “I like that's it's clear, concise, and straightforward.”
- “The strategic [initiatives], goals, focus areas and KPIs for each of the pillars are well thought out and communicated.”
- “I love the direct connection back to the Community Plan, and the very clear, concise pillars with their top 3 goals/objectives. The structure is easy to understand and ties back to much of the work the City does.”
- “It pulls everyone together and forces us to live up to the vision of the Strategic Plan.”

Q4. Do you have any suggestions on how the Strategic Plan could be improved? Do you feel there is anything missing from the Strategic Plan overall? Is there something that should be in the Plan that is not currently?

This question received 151 responses. Responses have been largely coded into key themes.

Do you have any suggestions on how the Strategic Plan could be improved?

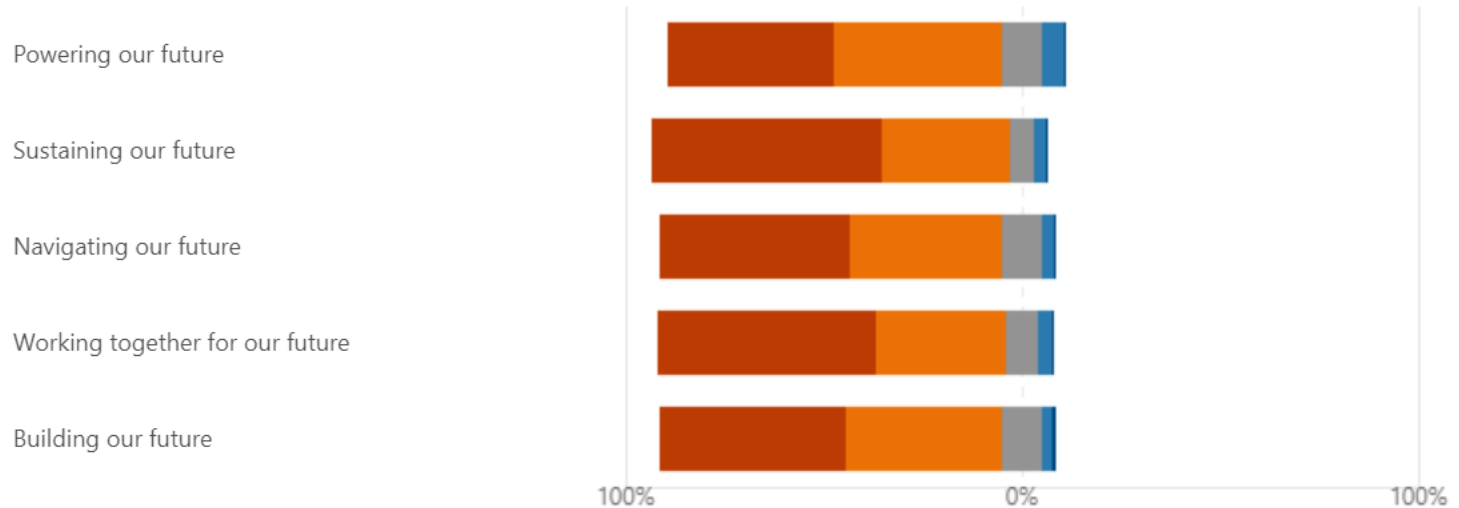


Sample Quotes from Q4

- “Sometimes the boring/everyday/regular task that needs to be done gets missed in these overarching plans - it is sometimes easy to feel left out when trying to align your job with strategic plans.”
- “I think it would be great if there was some way to easily see and track the projects through out the city that relate to each pillar to see the progress that has been made.”
- “I think given the growing EDI lens there should be more explicit references to equity and inclusion throughout the Plan itself and more measurable goals.”
- “I think we're missing a piece about how we share and collaborate on work internally to support external processes, services, and communication. As a Corporation, we are behind the curve and siloed in terms of how we manage information, manage services, manage documents, and manage data...”

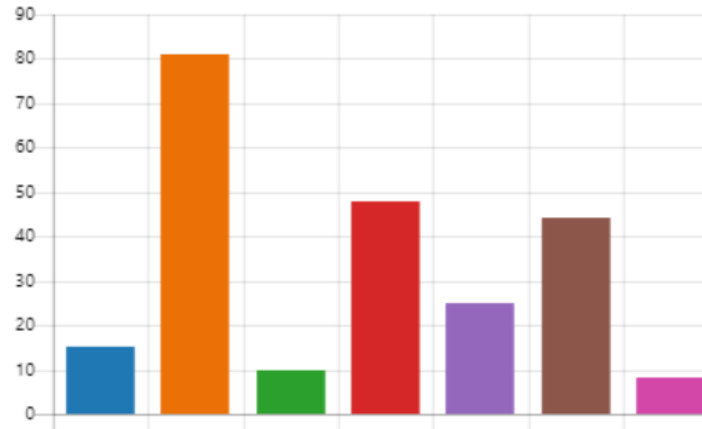
Q5. Each of the following Strategic Pillars are in the City’s current Strategic Plan. Please answer whether you feel the Strategic Pillar is still an appropriate priority for the refreshed Strategic Plan: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree



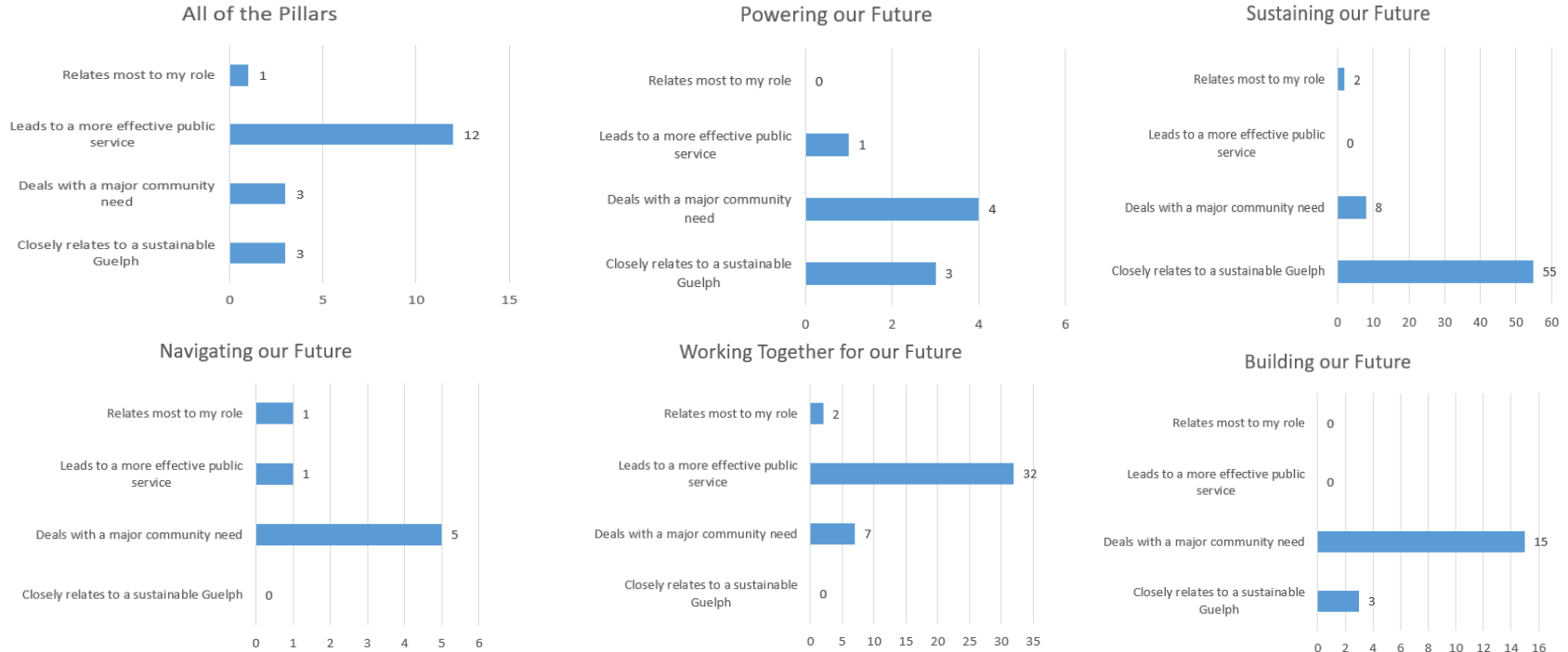
Q6. Is there one Strategic Pillar that stands out to you as being most important for the City of Guelph to advance, as it looks to the years ahead?

● Powering our future	15
● Sustaining our future	81
● Navigating our future	10
● Working together for our future	48
● Building our future	25
● All of the Pillars	44
● None of the Pillars	8



Q7. Why do you feel the Strategic Pillar(s) you selected are the most important? (1/2)

This question received 125 responses. Responses have largely been coded into key themes.



Q7. Why do you feel the Strategic Pillar(s) you selected are the most important? (2/2)

Sample Quotes from Q7

- **Sustaining:** “Climate change and environmental protection is the issue of our time. The other pillars are dependent upon environmental quality to exist.”
- **Sustaining:** “I expect the effects of climate change (e.g., drought, flood, storms, etc.) will continue to increase in frequency and intensity. The safety and dependability of our critical infrastructure is therefore of utmost importance.”
- **Building:** “Because this one more than the other ones look at the City as more than just a municipal corporation, but all of the components (and people and businesses) that make Guelph a great place to be.”
- **Navigating:** “Transit is an integral part of navigating the future in Guelph - the more multi-modal connections we make - the more active transportation connections we make with Transit - so many benefits to our team at Transit. All pillars are important, but this one resonates with me a little stronger.”
- **Powering:** “It ties in our role as a municipality, to the community, while connecting it to global and regional markets. This in my opinion, will help us progress faster than other municipalities.”
- **Working Together:** “The City's corporate services, under this pillar, will be the backbone that enables the other pillars to sustainably succeed.”
- **All of the Pillars:** “We are one Corporation. Each pillar represents different functions within the City. It is impossible to prioritize one over the other because we need all of them to function as a Corporation and as a City.”

Demographic Data

Q8. How long have you worked for the City of Guelph?

● 0 - 4 years	107
● 5 - 9 years	58
● 10 - 20 years	42
● 20+ years	24



Q10. Which service area do you belong under?

● Corporate Services	49
● Infrastructure, Development a...	101
● Office of the CAO	18
● Public Services	63



Q10. Do you live in Guelph?

● Yes	135
● No	96



Q11. How long have you lived in Guelph?

● 0 - 4 years	16
● 5 - 9 years	27
● 10 - 20 years	29
● 20+ years	63





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