

Strategic Plan Refresh: Council Workshop #1

January 24, 2023

Why we do strategic planning

Daniel Beemsigne, Acting GM, SIIS

Shanna O'Dwyer, Acting GM, Finance

What are we doing?

Goal

- Refresh Guelph. Future Ready. City's Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 by July 2023.
- As the organization's North Star, ensure the plan heads Guelph in the right direction.

Why?

- The strategic plan guides the actions of the City and its departments for 2024-2027, which in turn informs the City's multi-year budget (MYB) planning process.

Council's role in this process

- Council is the governing and key decision-making body for the City of Guelph.
- Council sets strategic direction, City staff implement.
- The strategic plan is Council's key tool for communicating priorities to staff.
- Without Council input, the plan becomes less effective, disconnecting Council and staff.

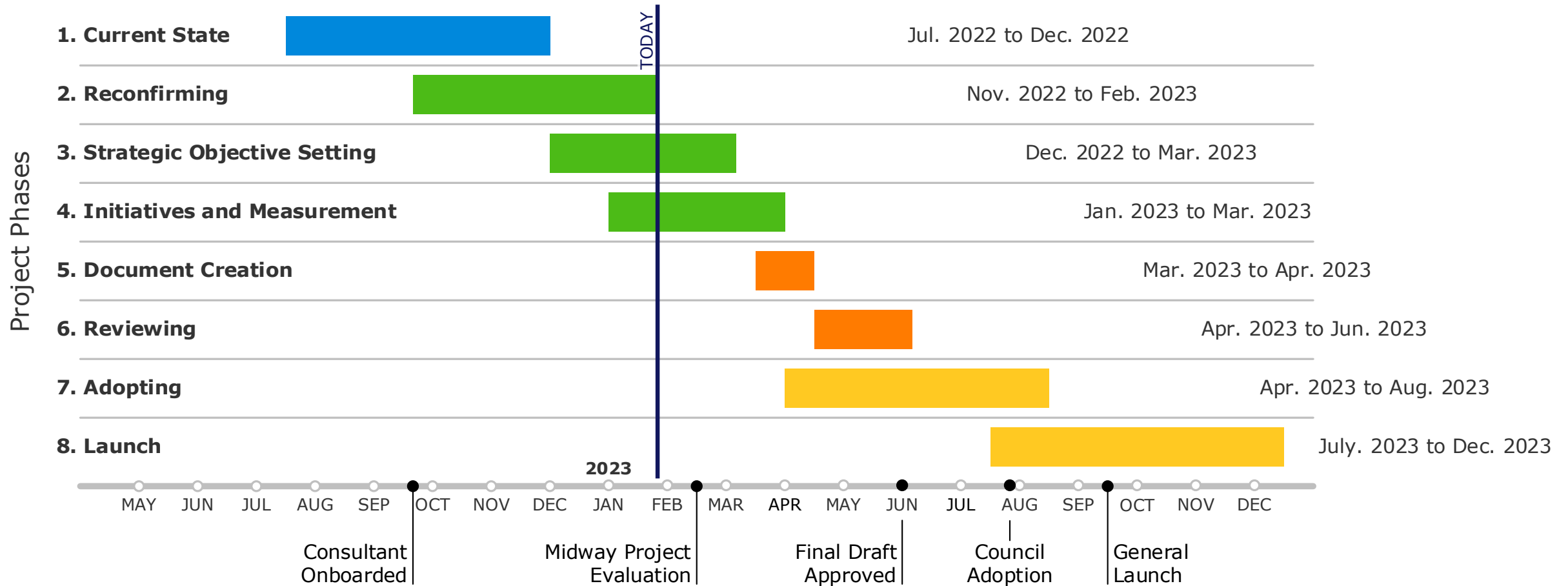
Why the strategic plan is important?

The strategic plan is:

- The organization's guiding North Star.
- How Council's priorities become known to City staff.
- A key guide for department business planning, the budget, and individual work plans.

Strategic and MYB planning aligned together are a municipal best practice—Guelph is an early adopter.

Where are we in the refresh journey?



Our strategic alignment



Strategic plan guides the budget

The Strategic Plan's five priorities (strategic pillars) guide the budget, setting us on a sustainable path for our economy, environment, and transportation while supporting an efficient workforce and united community.

Powering our future



Sustaining our future



Navigating our future



Working together for our future



Building our future



SMART strategic objectives



Strategic plan elements

Strategic Pillars

Strategic Objectives

Key Performance Indicators

Strategic Initiatives



City of Guelph – Strategic Plan Refresh

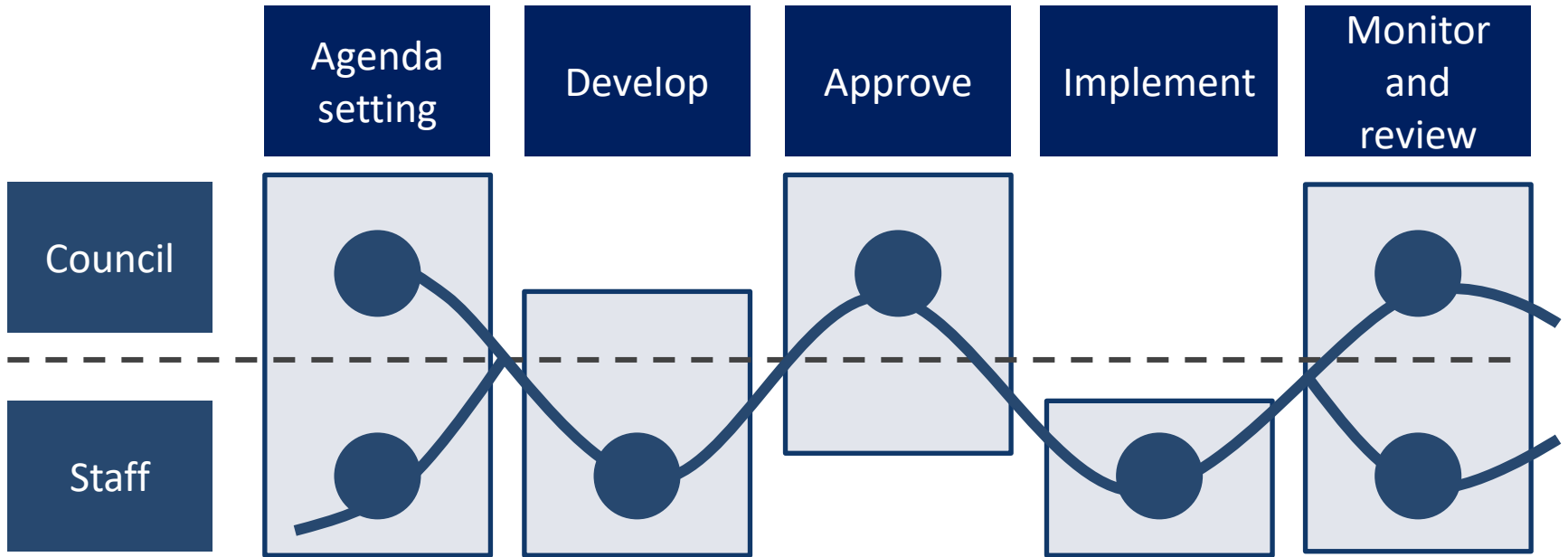
Council Workshop

January 24, 2023

Contents

ITEM	TIMING
1. Welcome and Objectives of Today's Session	5 MIN
2. Staff Presentation – Why We Do Strategic Planning	15 MIN
3. Reviewing Guelph. Future. Ready. 2019-2023. – What Worked and Where Can We Improve?	25 MIN
4. SWOT Analysis: Understanding the Community and Administrative Landscape	30 MIN
5. Our Priorities for 2023-2025 – Where Do We Go From Here?	40 MIN
6. Next Steps	5 MIN

Council and Staff Roles in Strategic Planning



NOTE: What We Heard

- The following slides share many insights from the engagement with staff and Council over the last few months.
- It is not an exhaustive list of everything we heard.
- Rather, the slides aggregate the input shared with us and present key themes.

Insights of the Current Strategic Plan

Satisfaction with Current Plan: Some Positive Opinions (1/2)

- **Just having a Plan was itself a win** and progress for the organization.
- **Last process was good**...but some of Council did not leave the vote feeling “we had done this” or that “this is our plan.”
- **The current Plan was the first Strategic Plan with explicit links to the budget and KPIs.**
 - City has made some progress on measuring and assessing its performance.
- **The Plan was a “living document”** and enabled the organization to react and adapt as needed.
- **The key themes make sense** and reflect Guelph.
 - The plan puts the environment front and centre.
- **The Plan is easy-to-read, well-designed, concise** – it’s a useful communications vehicle.
- **Functional:** Where it was vague it was because it needed to be...

Satisfaction with the Current Plan: Some Negative Opinions (2/2)

- **Too many priorities** – narrow down to the most important ones.
- **Too vague to be actionable:** leaves most things open to debate.
 - So high-level that almost anything can fit in.
- **Lacks SMART Goal discipline.**
- **KPIs could be tighter** and reporting on progress more frequent.
- **Governance:** Currently operating under old Plan with new Council.
- **Is it binding or not?** Plan lacked weight to drive decisions – it was not binding for Council.
- **More of a “staff plan”:** Plan used to advance internal initiatives, not by Council to give direction.
- **What is the status of what isn’t there:** What does it mean when we say something “was rolled into the strat plan?”
- **Stay in our lane:** Plan included priorities/issues beyond our jurisdiction.

Weaknesses of the Current Plan:

- **Make sure it is all affordable:** Some priorities not appropriately resourced or funded.
- **Update it:** Plan should be updated to reflect new realities and priorities (post COVID).
- **Clarify the relationship** between the Community Plan and the Strategic Plan.
- **Add to it:** Be more explicit about EDI and accessibility as a lens for the organization.
- **Better Communication:** Opportunity to improve how the Plan is communicated – e.g., more plain language.
- **More authentic to us:** Plan needs to feel “Guelph-y” – should articulate what makes Guelph special and unique (as an administration and community).

General Observations (1/2):

- **Prioritize:** Everything cannot be a priority. Need to have a laser focus and be clear about what we want to do as a City.
- **Fund priorities through MYB:** Need to link our goals with the MYB. May need to reprioritize to make these financial commitments in the current economic environment.
- **Don't reinvent the wheel:** Can't be all new priorities. Finish what we have already committed to and do it well.
- **Greater focus on outcomes and who we serve:** We are here to serve the public and must always ask “for whose benefit?”
- **Plan must help us say yes...and, importantly, no:** The Strategic Plan should guide what Council does and also what it doesn't do.
- **Focus on action and implementation:** How will we implement, not just what.

General Observations (2/2):

- **The Strategic Plan is our commitment to each other, the community, our partners:** Once we set the direction, we need to get serious about delivery and stay on track.
- **Measurement and reporting:** Better KPIs, more information and routine reporting on progress against the Plan is needed.
- **Who are we trying to benefit or serve?** Who will benefit? Must better align our intentions with our policy.
- **Governance:** Council to stay focused at the governance level and leave the administration to the administration.
- **“Stay in our lane”:** Be clear about what the municipality can reasonably do on areas outside of its direct control.
- **“We can’t make all our decisions now.”** Some are not ready to be made, and that is okay.

SWOT Exercise

Strengths (1/2)

The Administration

- Committed, driven staff team
- Effective Council relationships
- Good Council-staff relations – Council tends to support staff recommendations
- Track record of being leaders in sector
- Strong financial position and MYB budget process
- Demonstrated success in advancing projects
- Nimble track record of responding to emerging issues
- Innovation in procurement: “Not all business as usual”
- Focused on modernization, leading edge practices (e.g., participatory budgeting, online services)

Strengths (2/2)

The Community

- Progressive, inclusive community
- High quality of life
- A truly “livable City” – this is an economic development strength
- Engaged, dynamic community
- Strong social capital (e.g., community service, clubs)
- Strategic location (hwy/train connections, gateway to Grey-Bruce)
- Post-secondary hub (UofG, College)
- Relatively prosperous community
- Attractive City
- Access to green space, parks, trails
- Great air quality
- Demographically diverse – a community of all ages
- Ability to retain youth
- Land available for economic development
- Relatively safe

Weaknesses (1/2)

The Administration

- Lack of focus/rigour in decision-making
- Slow to implement (delays, etc.)
- Need to continue to develop and work on Council-staff relationship
- More work to do to commit KPIs, report on progress
- Disconnect between Strategic Plan and staff direction
- HR: “Guelph is a great training ground for Waterloo employees”
- Riding on our reputation: Need to be leaders again
- Need to deepen relationships with broader stakeholders
- Communication and customer service
- Guelph isn’t as ‘green’ as it thinks it is – falling behind on climate file
- Focus of services in the downtown – what about other areas?
- We dabble in areas outside City’s jurisdiction – need to stick to our lane
- History of fiscal prudence means need to “catch up” (e.g., approved inadequate facilities to save \$)

Weaknesses (2/2)

The Community

- Housing: Lack of supply of attainable and affordable
- Homelessness and lack of support services
- Intense mental health and addictions challenges in the community
- Inadequate access to supportive housing
- Impact of social issues on downtown
- COVID-related stresses still being felt in the community (e.g., businesses that just barely survived COVID now facing new challenges)
- Lack of water supply to support growth
- Inadequate leveraging of City's culture
- Increasing resident expectations – not always appreciative of what Guelph already has and the work the City does

Opportunities (1/2)

The Administration

- Set the line between what we need to do and what we want to do
- Finish what we start
- Scale back things that are unaffordable or defer
- Planning: “use it or lose it” policy on approvals
- Pursue new water supply opportunities
- More focused retreats and policy discussions between Council and staff
- Empower staff to lead, be innovative
- Continued advocacy to province
- Build stronger relationships with development community
- Greater leveraging of university and college relationships
- Build on momentum of the circular economy and food program
- Engage in cultural planning to enhance livability and tourism attraction

Opportunities (2/2)

The Community

- Continued collaboration with businesses and employers
- More engagement with First Nations
- Improve connections to other communities (e.g., Guelph-Goderich trail)
- Federal and provincial support for community and social services and supports
- Better leverage the City's strategic location - first municipality outside Greenbelt to the West
- Better engage and empower the community to support key priorities (e.g., climate change mitigation, community sustainability)
- Climate change resilience will drive future prosperity
- The best ec dev strategy is to build a thriving community where people want to locate and invest...don't chase companies

Threats (1/2)

The Administration

- Provincial policy changes
- Loss of DC revenue
- Inflation, increasing cost of infrastructure projects
- History of property taxes greater than inflation
- Continued COVID revenue/cost impacts
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Provincial inaction induces Guelph to spend too heavily on matters outside Guelph's jurisdiction
- Administration/Council trying to do too much – how can you focus on anything when you're focusing on everything?
- Competition for municipal staff

Threats (2/2)

The Community

- Resurgence of COVID
- Economic recession/inflation and impacts on affordability of living
- Lack of affordable housing to support job attraction and economic development
- Inadequate relations with development community to get the housing we need
- Competition from neighbours for business attraction
- Labour shortage
- Competition from other educational institutions
- Inadequate local and regional transportation
- Erosion of public trust in government/decline in civic engagement (during but not necessarily on because of COVID)
- Public expectations exceed municipal capacity/revenue

Setting Priorities

Reminder: Current Strategic Plan

POWERING

Accelerate innovation economy through partnerships

Help businesses to succeed

Support businesses to adapt to changing workforces

SUSTAINING

Climate Adaptation Plan

Reduce carbon footprint

Plan/design a sustainable City

NAVIGATING

Build capacity to adopt clean & efficient technology

Provide attractive, reasonable & affordable transportation options

Improve local transportation & regional transit connectivity

WORKING TOGETHER

Attract & develop employees

Improve communications & customer service

Long term financial & resource strategy that is achievable

BUILDING

Maintain existing community assets & secure new ones

Increase availability of housing to meet community needs

Continue to build equitable, strong viable & healthy communities

What We Heard: Powering

POWERING

Accelerate
innovation
economy
through
partnerships

Help
businesses to
succeed

Support
businesses to
adapt to
changing
workforces

- Focus on the basics and creating the conditions for business success (e.g., housing, transit, community amenities).
 - Create a great city – this will attract investment due to quality of life.
- Reduce red tape and create an “open for business environment.”
- Focus on policies to help businesses, not dollars.
- Chamber is a key partner – need to build a stronger relationship.
- Need more lens to how we approach the economy – equity, social enterprise and community.
- Look beyond the downtown, even though the downtown is important.
- Hard to know what we achieved here – who did we go after, who did we get and what did it take to do it?

What We Heard: Sustaining

SUSTAINING

Climate
Adaptation
Plan

Reduce carbon
footprint

Plan/design a
sustainable
City

- Focus on what we can control – we are 3% of GHG emissions.
- Don't over commit or overpromise...yet need to be bold.
- More partnerships/collaboration with developers to advance 'green' development.
- Duplication of provincial and federal initiatives.
- Needs more detail, more implementation weight behind it – do we have the expertise, capacity to do this?
- Focusing on transit and bike lanes could help reduce GHGs in the community.
- Are we doing enough to balance protection of greenspace, trees with need for growth?

What We Heard: Navigating

NAVIGATING

Build capacity to adopt clean & efficient technology

Provide attractive, reasonable & affordable transportation options

Improve local transportation & regional transit connectivity

- Should we be focusing on regional transit when there is still work to do on local transit?
- Need to continue to bring an equity and accessibility lens to transportation planning.
- Improve safety and connectivity of cycling lanes, trails, multi-use paths – need to fill in gaps.
- Not moving fast enough on active transportation.
- Apply SMART goal discipline focus to outline our targets and work plan (e.g., transit stops within 10 mins of every resident).
- Need to be intentional about who we benefit through investment.

What We Heard: Working Together

WORKING TOGETHER

Attract & develop employees

Improve communications & customer service

Long term financial & resource strategy that is achievable

- Stronger focus on our staff: engagement, respect, recruitment, retention and nurturing talent.
- More adaptability in how we treat employees, especially in a post-pandemic environment (e.g., flexible work arrangements).
- Ensure we have the capacity to implement our priorities.
- Good progress on financial sustainability.
- Continue to improve customer service and communication.
- Are we engaging the community enough? Too much? In the most effective way?
- Opportunity to achieve savings through back-office consolidation where possible (purchasing, etc.).

What We Heard: Building

BUILDING

Maintain existing community assets & secure new ones

Increase availability of housing to meet community needs

Continue to build equitable, strong viable & healthy communities

- More diversity of and creativity in housing types to achieve new growth targets.
- More affordable, supportive housing and supporting policies.
- Housing affordability (rental and ownership) critical to retention of youth, workforce.
- Go beyond housing: build complete communities (parks, etc.).
- Housing insecurity and homelessness continue to be challenges.
- Concern about activity and spending in areas beyond the City's control.
- How do we align goals around housing and building assets with our climate and environmental goals?

Looking Towards 2023-2026

- The following slides provide some draft objectives for each of the existing pillars, based primarily on staff engagement and feedback.
- These are intended, at this time, only to generate discussion and to solicit input from Council as a group, now that we have heard from all of you individually.
- They do not yet have the benefit of Council's direction with regards to priority-setting.
- They also have not YET been optimized to reflect improvements that Council may wish to see in the structure and/or content in the plan (in relation to the number of priority or specificity of the activities and language, etc.).

Please consider the following key questions and keep these in the back of your mind as we discuss what should be included in the refreshed Strategic Plan:

- What's already committed to that should continue to be in the plan?
- Does the City already have a plan/strategy in place (e.g. a master plan, corporate strategy, etc.)? Are there areas where it's appropriate to move to implementation?
- Are there things that may work better as values or principles because they cut across the organization?
- We already said we can't do everything. Are there some areas that should move to the top of the priority list vs. others?

Building	Sustaining	Navigating	Powering
Invest in City services and programs to support quality of life and place	Mitigate climate change impacts on City services and assets	Improve Guelph's public transit system	Promote investment attraction in Guelph's economy
Develop housing strategy and implementation plan	Advance efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the community and administration	Build capacity to adopt clean and efficient technology	Enable local businesses to succeed
Promote community well-being and safety	Protect and conserve Guelph's natural and heritage resources	Improve accessibility and reliability of transportation network to support movement of people and goods	Make Guelph the national epicenter for the growth of an innovative circular economy
Work with government and community partners to ensure appropriate supports for vulnerable community members	Support sustainable growth in the City through policy and planning	Support active transportation options, including trails and cycling lanes	Continue to advance the revitalization of the downtown
Advance talent attraction and workforce development			

Working Together

Commit to customer service excellence in delivering citizen-centric services	Ensure continued financial sustainability and asset management planning	Promote a focus on EDI and accessibility within the administration and the community	Invest in data and IT architecture and governance to support continuous improvement in service delivery	Ensure continued effective governance and administration
	Ensure Guelph continues to be an Employer of Choice			

Building

Invest in City services and programs to support quality of life and place

Develop housing strategy and implementation plan

Promote community well-being and safety

Work with government and community partners to ensure appropriate supports for vulnerable community members

Navigating

Improve Guelph's public transit system

Build capacity to adopt clean and efficient technology

Improve accessibility and reliability of transportation network to support movement of people and goods

Support active transportation options, including trails and cycling lanes

Sustaining

Mitigate climate change impacts on City services and assets

Advance efforts reduce carbon emissions in the community and administration

Protect and conserve Guelph's natural and heritage resources

Support sustainable growth in the City through policy and planning

Powering

Promote investment attraction in Guelph's economy

Enable local businesses to succeed

Make Guelph the national epicenter for the growth of an innovative circular economy

Continue to advance the revitalization of the downtown

Advance talent attraction and workforce development

Working Together

Commit to customer service excellence in delivering citizen-centric services

Promote a focus on EDI and accessibility within the administration and the community

Ensure continued financial sustainability and asset management planning

Invest in data and IT architecture and governance to support continuous improvement in service delivery

Ensure Guelph continues to be an Employer of Choice

Ensure continued effective governance and administration

Next Steps

- Revised strategic pillars and objectives – to be shared with Council at the next workshop on February 22, 2023.
- Collaboration with ET and CMT on strategic initiatives and Key Performance Indicators.



Toronto

416-864-7112

Ottawa

613-231-2630

strategycorp.com