

Staff Report



To	Committee of the Whole
Service Area	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Date	Wednesday, July 5, 2023
Subject	Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Recommendation

1. That Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027 be approved.
 2. That the costs associated with the implementation of Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027 be referred to the 2024-2027 multi-year budget planning process in Fourth Quarter 2023.
 3. That staff be directed to share the final key performance indicators for Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027 in an information report in fall 2023.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report presents Future Guelph, the City’s Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 to Council (see **Attachment-1**). Additionally, the report outlines the strategic alignment of Future Guelph and other City plans, the strategic planning process, and next steps for implementing Future Guelph (the “Plan”) including the upcoming multi-year budget (MYB) planning process.

Future Guelph is comprised of the City of Guelph’s vision, mission and values and is organized in four theme areas: Foundations, City Building, Environment, and People and Economy, with 13 strategic objectives. Each objective is further supported by strategic initiatives.

Key Findings

Future Guelph renews the City’s strategic direction and communicates Council’s priorities for Guelph over the next four years. It will align the organization, including the City’s MYB, business plans and work plans. The plan will also continue the City’s annual progress reporting process, highlighting the accomplishments of the City’s implementation of the strategic plan. In the fall, the plan’s KPIs and targets will be shared with Council through an information report.

The strategic planning process engaged Council and staff in a series of workshops, interviews and focus groups. The process was also aligned with the City’s MYB planning process to ensure long-term financial planning supports the Plan’s implementation. An outline of the City’s strategic planning process used to develop the Plan can be found in **Attachment-4**.

Future Guelph reflects Council's priorities as well as the long-term vision of the community as informed by community engagement from Tier 1 projects, master plans and the Community Plan.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report introduces Future Guelph, the City's Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, and upon Council approval establishes new strategic alignments for the organization for the next four years.

Financial Implications

The work undertaken to develop Future Guelph was funded through an existing Council-approved budget.

The costs associated with the implementation of Future Guelph will be referred to the 2024-2027 MYB planning process for consideration and approval by Council in Fourth Quarter (Q4) 2023, and future confirmation budgets.

Report

Strategic Alignment

The City's strategic plan is an important policy document providing direction that guides staff decision-making when implementing Council priorities for Guelph. It identifies important activities needed to achieve the City's vision and objectives. Council and staff were engaged in the strategic planning process to build upon the current 2019-2023 strategic plan. As part of the Plan's development, community engagement was used from the Community Plan, as well as engagement from Tier 1 projects, Master Plans and other engagement opportunities to ensure community feedback was reflected.

Once approved by Council, Future Guelph will outline the strategic direction and objectives for Guelph over the next four years. Future Guelph's initiatives will inform departmental business planning, staff work plans and the City's MYB. Overall, Future Guelph will align the organization's plans, from the Community Plan and Master Plans through to performance reporting (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. City of Guelph’s Strategic Alignment Diagram.



The City’s Strategic Plan: Future Guelph

The Plan is comprised of the corporate vision, mission and values and is organized in four theme areas: Foundations, City Building, Environment, and People and Economy, and 13 strategic objectives (see Figure 2). Each objective is further supported by strategic initiatives.

Figure 2. Future Guelph – Overview of the Strategy.



For the development of Future Guelph, staff used a simplified approach to organize the Plan, focused on using clear language and making the objectives and initiatives easy to understand. For the City’s vision, mission and values, a survey was conducted with staff to reconfirm its relevance. Based on the results, it was determined that the City’s current vision, mission and values were still relevant and would remain the same for Future Guelph.

Future Guelph is outlined and summarized as follows:

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision: An inclusive, connected prosperous city where we look after each other and our environment.

Our Mission: Working together to deliver responsible, responsive and professional public service to Guelph's growing and diverse community.

Our Values:

- Integrity – Honest and ethical.
- Service – Community-driven.
- Inclusion – Stronger for our differences.
- Wellness – Adaptable and resilient.
- Learning – Always learning.

Strategic Themes and Objectives

Foundations

The Foundations theme focuses on the internal investments needed to position Guelph to provide excellent services and programs, while maintaining both fiscal responsibility and accountability, to sustainably support Guelph's long-term growth.

Objectives for Foundations:

- Be an employer of choice – Attract, engage and retain the right people to implement the City's strategic plan and deliver excellent service.
- Advocate for our city – Advance City priorities through advocacy and support respectful engagement and relationship building with Indigenous individuals, communities and Nations.
- Lead with accountability – Continue to mature the City's approach to performance reporting, continuous improvement, governance and risk management.
- Maintain the City's healthy financial position – Strengthen financial policies and practices by effectively managing City-owned assets and resources to sustainably support the City's long-term growth.
- Provide excellent service – Plan for the future through investments in digital and technology initiatives, and service design and delivery, using the City's equity lens, to remove barriers, improve customer service and deepen engagement.

City Building

The City Building theme focuses on supporting housing growth in Guelph, while investing in City infrastructure and programming to enable growth, expand opportunities for improving transportation, celebrate culture, and attract people to city parks and recreational services.

Objectives for City Building:

- Improve housing supply – Meet Guelph's housing pledge and ensure the City's policies and decisions will improve housing supply and support sustainable growth.
- Grow and care for our community spaces and places – Build the South End Community Centre, the library at the Baker Street Redevelopment site and attract more people to our parks and programs.

- Make it easier to get around – Improve Guelph’s transportation system.

Environment

The Environment theme focuses on the City’s role in environmental stewardship to reduce corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy use, protect and improve our green spaces, and support community climate change action.

Objectives for Environment:

- Be a leader in climate action – Prepare to withstand and recover from the impacts of climate change and build a healthy, sustainable and resilient city through green infrastructure initiatives and tree canopy expansion.
- Empower Guelph’s community to help create a sustainable city – Enact environmental stewardship and help reduce community GHG emissions through programming and supporting community initiatives.

People and Economy

The People and Economy theme focuses on supporting the local economy, businesses and people to improve economic prosperity, safety and community well-being in and around the downtown area and across Guelph.

The objectives for People and Economy:

- Grow Guelph’s economy – Grow the local economy through support of businesses, tourism and investment attraction.
- Make downtown a vibrant place for everyone – Collaborate with downtown partners and implement the Downtown Infrastructure Revitalization Program to ensure a thriving, competitive and safe downtown with beautiful community spaces.
- Support community well-being – Convene and collaborate with community partners, organizations, non-profits and others to address systemic gaps, challenges and opportunities in Guelph.

The City’s Strategic Planning Process

With the current strategic plan concluding at the end of 2023, the City’s strategic planning process began in October 2022, following the onboarding of the project consultant, StrategyCorp Inc. From October 2022 to June 2023, the project team (City staff and StrategyCorp Inc.) facilitated development of the City’s 2024-2027 strategic plan. Before development began, a cross-departmental advisory committee was formed to guide and support the strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process has been aligned with the City’s MYB planning process—a municipal best practice. Both will be refreshed every four years to renew the organization’s strategic direction and objectives. Then the MYB will determine the pace of implementation.

The City’s strategic planning process was structured into four steps as outlined below:

1. **Environmental Scan:** Defined the City’s current state and identified the major trends impacting Guelph. As part of the scan, an organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) analysis were conducted.

2. **Vision, Mission and Values:** Reconfirmed with staff the City's vision, mission and values are still valid and applicable.
3. **Strategic Themes and Objectives:** Strategic themes and objectives were developed to achieve Council priorities and the City's vision.
4. **Strategic Initiatives:** Strategic initiatives were developed to support the Strategic Plan's objectives.

A comprehensive outline of the City's strategic planning process used to develop Future Guelph can be found in **Attachment-4**.

Implementation of Future Guelph

Upon Council's approval of Future Guelph, staff will incorporate the Plan's initiatives into departmental business plans for implementation. The 2024-2027 MYB planning process is anticipated to begin in October and end with Council budget approval in December. The City's MYB will outline the financial commitments of Future Guelph.

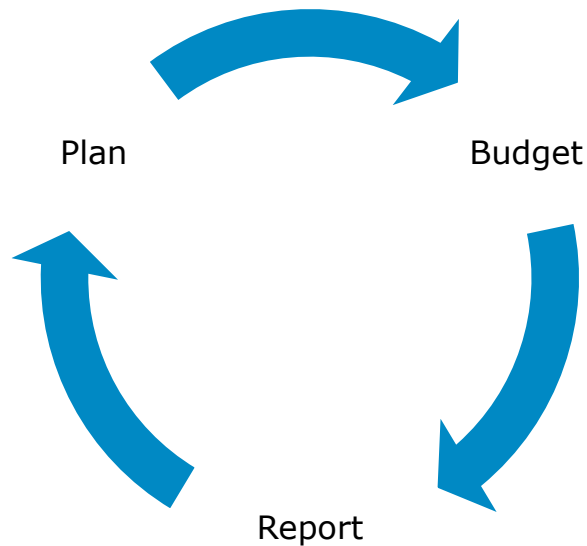
The MYB is the financing tool that puts the strategic plan into action. By linking the strategic plan to the MYB, alignment can be made between the Plan's objectives and initiatives with funding requirements, timing and cost. The MYB benefits the City by providing:

- Alignment of long-term goals and objectives with long-term funding plans;
- Greater certainty for taxpayers/residents about the future direction of taxes and the timing of Council initiatives;
- Fully integrated and transparent linkage of the operating impacts from capital projects;
- Improved accountability and transparency over spending plan changes;
- Prioritization of routine projects alongside strategic projects; and
- Administrative efficiencies resulting in greater value-added work in budget confirmation years.

In the fall, Future Guelph's KPIs and targets will be shared with Council through an information report. The performance reporting of Future Guelph begins mid-2024 and will continue until the end of the Plan's reporting period in 2028.

The strategic plan and MYB are components of the strategic planning cycle. On a regular basis, the cycle will move through the following the three steps: plan, budget and report (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. City of Guelph’s Strategic Planning Cycle.



The plan phase of the cycle focuses on setting direction for the organization based on the information available. The budget phase will be used to fund the activities in the plan. The report phase is measuring and reporting progress back to the organization.

Future Guelph has been developed to be a living document. By maintaining the strategic planning cycle, the City is committed to ensuring Future Guelph is flexible and agile to achieve Council priorities and the City’s vision.

Financial Implications

The work undertaken to develop Future Guelph was funded through an existing Council-approved budget.

The costs associated with the implementation of Future Guelph will be referred to the 2024-2027 MYB planning process for consideration and approval by Council in Q4 2023, and future confirmation budgets.

Consultations

The strategic planning process conducted multiple engagements through workshops, interviews, focus groups and a survey, across all levels of the organization, including Council, the Executive Team and the Corporate Management Team. For strategic initiative development, subject matter experts from across the organization were engaged.

As part of the strategic planning process, an extensive inventory of community engagement, including engagement from the Community Plan, as well as engagement from Tier 1 projects, Master Plans and other engagement opportunities were used by the project team to inform the development of Future Guelph.

Consultation with institutional stakeholders was held from May to July 2023 to discuss alignment on shared objectives and opportunities for collaboration (see **Attachment-4**).

Attachments

Attachment-1 Future Guelph Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Attachment-2 Future Guelph Our Strategy at a Glance

Attachment-3 Future Guelph Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Presentation

Attachment-4 City of Guelph Strategic Planning Process and Supporting Strategies and Documents

Attachment-5 City of Guelph Current State and Trends Report

Attachment-6 City of Guelph Organizational SWOT and PESTEL Analysis

Departmental Approval

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