



# Open Government **ACTION PLAN**

August 2014



## **Open by Default – Participate by Nature**

### **A partnership between the public and its servants**

Guelph's Open Government vision is founded in a commitment to four principles: participation, innovation, transparency and accountability. It is a partnership between the public and its servants where local government becomes "open by default" and citizens "participate by nature".

If Guelph and its citizens are successful in 'living' Open Government, roles and accountability are better defined and understood, there is shared responsibility for how local government works and trust and confidence in local government improves.

If we can successfully demystify government and open up our processes, information and decision making, we will have made significant strides. When government is met by a willing public ready to learn, participate and contribute, we will have established an open government culture that will continue to evolve in pace with our growing community.

Guelph's citizens are highly motivated, community-minded and environmentally conscious. The City of Guelph has already made strides towards increasing access to its processes and data. Those strides have been consolidated under the Open Guelph banner. Open Guelph invited the community to shape how the City of Guelph would embrace Open Government principles at the beginning of the process. Our focus on open culture, governance and improving the relationship with the citizens we serve and our use of technology as a transformational tool rather than an end unto itself has guided our approach.

Open Government is not business as usual. For progress to be lasting it must be owned by the citizens as well as their government. For change to stick it must be deliberate and incremental. It must also allow for the fact that we might make well-meaning mistakes and need course corrections, but we can get it right if we are consistently collaborative, transparent and accountable.

Open Guelph is a goal and an invitation. It's a starting point and will grow, shift and change continuously. The following is Guelph's Open Government Action Plan outlining proposed actions and a phased approach for implementation that at the end will see public servants who are open by default working hand in hand with citizens who participate by nature.

If you have questions, feedback, suggested changes or want to find out how to get involved, here's our contact:

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## What Does Open Government Look Like?

The City of Guelph's Open Government vision:

To be a **transparent** and **accountable** local government that empowers citizens, leverages technology and encourages community **participation** in the development of **innovative** and meaningful solutions to shared opportunities and challenges.

### Open Government Principles

The vision of Open Government is underpinned by four principles, established in order to provide further clarity and to inform the development of this Open Government Action Plan.

**Participation:** To present the community with an opportunity to contribute to the development of public service, policy and legislation which best serves the common interest. The City of Guelph is committed to the proactive engagement of the community by using a variety of mechanisms to support an open and inclusive dialogue.

**Innovation:** The creation of value by providing co-created solutions to realize shared rewards. The City of Guelph is committed to collaborating and partnering with the community in a creative way to inspire a new approach to providing better public service and added value.

**Transparency:** To ensure that the community has access to information with respect to the business and affairs of the City, with limited exceptions, in a timely manner and in open formats without limits on reuse. The City of Guelph is committed to the development and maintenance of information systems designed to manage, safeguard and disseminate civic data in an efficient and meaningful way.

**Accountability:** An obligation for the City to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them and disclose the results to the community in a transparent manner. The City of Guelph is committed to supporting a legislative and administrative environment where governance mechanisms manage oversight and drive a commitment to continuous improvement.

### Open Government Directions

The principles of Open Government are driven through four key directions.

**Open engagement:** To build on the traditional and legislative foundation of public consultation to realize a transformative approach to the way in which the City can inform, consult, collaborate and empower the community.

**Open data:** To encourage the use of public data to be made available in practical formats for the purpose of facilitating the development of innovative and value added solutions.

**Access to information:** To subscribe to best practices and support the necessary tools with respect managing civic information for the purpose of enhancing the transparency of City business and the enrichment of information assets.

**Open governance:** To develop a management and control framework as well as the necessary policy instruments to define expectations and verify the performance of strategic initiatives related to Open Government.

## Rules of Engagement

In addition to the stories our stakeholders shared with us highlighting their desire for more transparency, accountability, collaboration and innovation, we also found through our review of Open Government practices around the world that there is a common set of rules of engagement used by successful Open Government initiatives. These include:

**Integrative Approach:** Different functions of Open Government (e.g. Open Engagement, Open Data) are approached in an integrative, holistic way given their interconnectedness

**Supportive Cultures:** The organizational leadership team, public service employees and the broader community are aligned and supportive of Open Government

**Joint Ownership:** Making co-production and joint ownership across leadership, public service employees and the broader community a fundamental way of working

**Test and Learn Culture:** Encourages testing and learning in a managed and disciplined way that is premised on an incremental approach to policy management and development

## Benefits




Open Government culture and initiatives create a range of planned and unexpected benefits.

- More opportunities for citizens to participate in civic decisions and see their opinions shape positive change in the community.
- Better, more cost-effective municipal services.
- Public policy that better reflects the community's needs, values and interests.
- A more informed and engaged community that works with the City to innovate and solve common challenges.
- A better Guelph.

## Story One. Engaging citizens in government decisions

Facilitated two-way conversation between government and residents to inform priorities and decisions.

### The Stakeholders

 <p><b>Kate, Guelph Resident</b></p> <p>Kate is a professional with a busy career and two children. While she'd like peace of mind that her tax money is being spent responsibly, she has little time to invest in researching and monitoring such activities.</p>	 <p><b>Mary, City of Guelph Employee</b></p> <p>Mary is an employee at the City. She believes a good civil servant should be accessible by the public and that community members play a key role in the improvement of the community. Mary would like to see technology applied more effectively to improve the efficiency of her department and to empower the community to contribute to the betterment of Guelph.</p>	 <p><b>Gerry, City of Guelph Councillor</b></p> <p>Gerry is a City of Guelph Councillor. He is interested in gathering representative feedback from his constituents effectively and efficiently, to ensure he has comprehensive understanding of their needs and can represent them well.</p>
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### The Story

**Kate (Guelph Resident)** registered her profile at MyGuelph.ca and subscribed to topics of interest.



Issues that affect:

- My neighborhood
- My ward
- The city at large

Topics related to:

- Arts and Culture
- Parks and Recreation
- Budget Deliberation



During the consultation timeframe, **Mary (City of Guelph Employee)** solicited feedback that is automatically sent to community members like Kate who have requested to be engaged on the topic.

**(City of Guelph)**

**Kate (Guelph Resident)** receives an invitation to offer her opinion. For her convenience, multiple in-person and online opportunities are offered. She accesses My.Guelph.ca to research and review peer opinions. And she votes on her preferred course of action.



**Mary (City of Guelph Employee)** and **Gerry (City Councillor)** review the votes and feedback from stakeholders before formulating their recommendations and decisions. With fact-based insights that are representative and timely, Mary and Gerry feel more confident their decisions reflect the needs and priorities of the community.



### Key Benefits

- Improved access to information for residents through new online channels
- Coordinated, streamlined ability for staff to consult/engage with citizens on a range of topics
- New tools for Council/staff to view aggregated, geographic input across city (e.g. heat maps) and increase outreach to areas with low participation
- Improved transparency and accountability (e.g. budget priorities) by opening up and simplifying access to key processes

## Story Two. E-Service: Working Together to Improve Service Levels

Citizen requests are fast-tracked to City service providers and citizens receive timely updates to track progress and completion.

### The Stakeholders

 <p><b>Kate</b> Guelph Resident</p> <p>Kate is a professional with a busy career and two children. While she'd like peace of mind that her tax money is being spent responsibly, she has little time to invest in researching and monitoring such activities.</p>	 <p><b>Mary</b> City of Guelph Employee</p> <p>Mary is an employee at the City. She believes a good civil servant should be accessible by the public and that community members play a key role in the betterment of the community. Mary would like to see technology be more effectively applied to improve efficiency of her department and to empower the community to contribute to the betterment of Guelph.</p>
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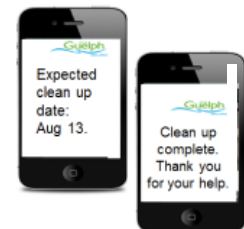
### The Story

**Kate (Guelph Resident)** is out hiking with her kids on a City-maintained trail. She sees a fallen tree that needs to be removed. She reports the fallen tree on Twitter and attaches an image. The location of the fallen tree is automatically geo-tagged and a work request is created.



**Mary (City of Guelph Employee)** receives the service request and attached image. She is able to assess needs and plan routes efficiently based on service request details, image and accurate location of the fallen tree.

Mary adds the service request to the crew that is already assigned to the area for the afternoon. The assignment of the service request automatically triggers and issues an update to Kate. After removing the tree, the City crew updates the service request through their mobile device. Another update is triggered and issued to notify both Mary and Kate the service request is resolved.



### Key Benefits

- Streamlined, automated service delivery processes reduce costs
- Simplified access for Citizens and greater transparency re service delivery processes & progress
- City employees able to communicate with community stakeholders frequently and cost-effectively





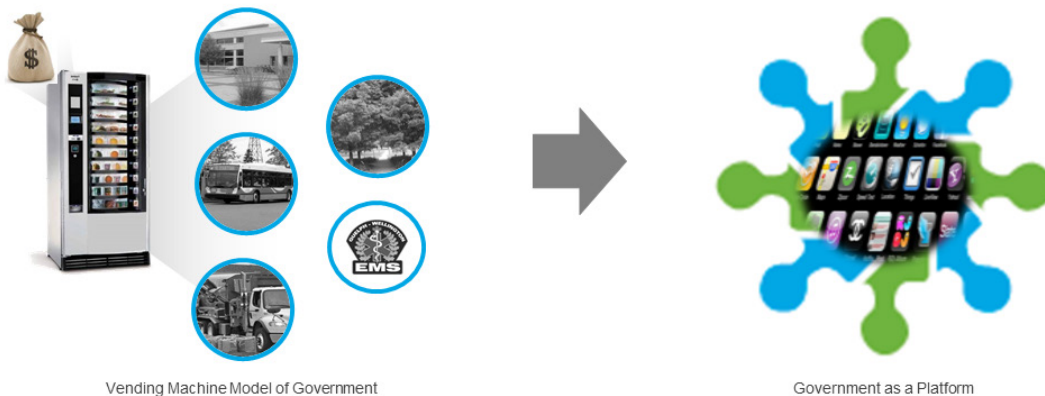
### Key Benefits

- Make it easier for all community stakeholders to participate in creating innovative solutions for city challenges
- Collaborate with businesses to improve access to relevant and meaningful information
- Make data collected by local government publicly available to encourage entrepreneurs to develop new applications

## Changing Role of Government

Expectations of government are changing. In a world where we can bank from home, share pictures with our family and friends in real-time and get a degree online, we expect government to be just as easy and accessible. We also expect to be able to actively participate and contribute ideas that make our communities better.

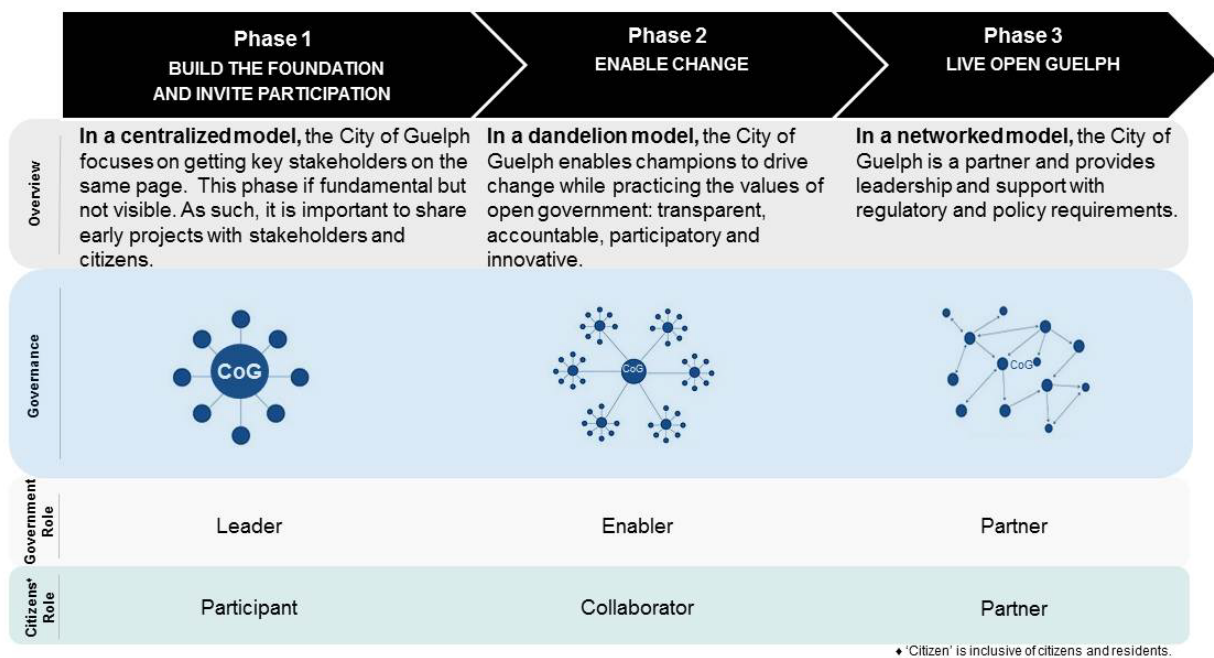
Government needs to move away from the traditional 'vending machine' model where the community deposits tax money and services come out, such as parks and recreations, transit and EMS. Instead, governments in the future need to create the foundation or platform that enables community stakeholders to fully participate in developing new solutions, redesigning services and determining priorities. The platform can be technology that enables people to share ideas, a hackathon using city data to create new software applications or projects that bring stakeholders together to redesign services.



## Recommended Action Plan

### Phased Implementation Approach:

The City of Guelph is already moving towards new governance approaches that share leadership and decision-making with a variety of community stakeholders. As the Guelph community continues to evolve to Open Government, the governance structure and the respective roles of the City of Guelph and Guelph citizens will also evolve. This evolution is reflected in the anticipated three phases of OGAP implementation plan outlined below:



### ACTIONS

To realize the Action Plan, six ACTIONS are recommended:

**ACTION 1. Move to Open Governance:** Establish a governance structure to enable collaboration with stakeholders, drive change and measure progress.

**ACTION 2. Create an "Open by Default" Culture:** Encourage and reward an open culture – transparent, accountable, participatory and innovative – with City of Guelph employees.

**ACTION 3. Open up City Hall:** Develop a MyGuelph platform that makes it easy for community members to understand and interact with local government.

**ACTION 4. Increase Community Engagement and Participation:** Improve awareness of the role and benefits of a civic community actively participating with local government.

**ACTION 5. Implement e-Government Services:** Provide digital government services to facilitate service delivery and information requests.

**ACTION 6. Make Data and Information Public Assets:** Share City data and information with accessible, open standards.

## **ACTION 1. Move to Open Governance**

We will establish a multi-stakeholder group of internal and external champions to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan, set annual priorities and monitor progress. This adaptable governance structure will include a unified and disciplined approach in the management, measurement and public reporting of Open Government related initiatives. Learning from this governance approach will be shared and implemented in other City project areas.

The key components of this ACTION include:

### **1.1 Establish Dedicated Human Resource(s) for Open Government<sup>+</sup>**

Given the degree of planning, coordination, monitoring and reporting activities associated with the Action Plan, the funding and staffing of dedicated resource(s) are strongly recommended to ensure successful implementation.

In Phase 1, the dedicated human resource(s) will support the Leadership Team and steward Open Government initiatives. Projects identified under the Action Plan will primarily be the responsibility of the related City departments, service areas and community stakeholder groups. The dedicated Open Government human resource(s) will facilitate sharing and coordination across project teams and stakeholder groups including community representatives, City departments and service areas, public sector organizations (e.g. other municipalities, Ontario Government) and academic institutions.

### **1.2 Form an Open Government Leadership Team**

In addition to the dedicated human resource(s), a Leadership Team consisting of internal and external stakeholders is also recommended. The role of the Leadership Team is to ensure alignment and shared ownership with key community stakeholder groups, City departments and service areas at each phase of the Open Government Action Plan. The Leadership Team will outline systems and processes to ensure consistency across projects and departments and monitor a project plan that includes schedules, key milestones, budgets and results.

### **1.3 Develop and Implement a Transparent Performance Measurement<sup>+</sup> Framework**

The role of the performance measurement<sup>+</sup> framework is to regularly and consistently measure Open Government initiatives in a standardized way to assess the overall impact of the Action Plan and share results and insights across stakeholder groups. The performance measures will be determined through consultation with stakeholders and other open government jurisdictions.

Transparent and near real-time performance reporting through online performance measurement dashboards or balanced scorecards will provide Council and community stakeholders the ability to view progress and challenges. Open and real-time accountability provides local government the ability to acknowledge and learn from failure, share mistakes across the organization and improve as a whole.

### **1.4 Develop and Implement a Prioritization Framework**

The prioritization framework outlines a process to consider projects holistically and identify higher value initiatives that will provide the most value for the community. The number of opportunities will assuredly exceed the resources available for implementation. Therefore, a consistent, disciplined and transparent approach to prioritizing projects developed with stakeholder consultation is important.

+ Projects identified by community stakeholders during Open Guelph Action Plan project consultation.

## **ACTION 2. Create an “Open by Default” Culture<sup>+</sup>**

We will encourage and reward an internal culture within the City of Guelph that is consistent with the four Open Guelph principles – transparency, accountability, participation and innovation. Cultural and operational alignment with Open Government values is imperative in the success of Open Government in Guelph and a mandatory component of the Action Plan.

Open Government isn’t about making more work for employees. Over time and with the appropriate education and technology, how we work will adapt and grow more efficient, transparent and accountable. The initial investment in human and financial resources will yield solutions that provide citizens with the ability to manage many services requests online.

The key components of this ACTION include:

### **2.1 Ensure Existing and New Policies, Codes of Conduct, Leadership Governance and Service Standards are premised on the Open by Default Principle**

“Open by default” is a concept that is being increasingly adopted by governments around the world. Simply put, it’s a share-first philosophy that habitually puts government data into the public domain while understanding that some information still needs to be protected for reasons including privacy or security.

To ensure the City can move through the Action Plan successfully, policies, codes of conduct, leadership governance and service standards need to be premised on the principle of Open by Default to enable department and service areas to move towards Open Government.

### **2.2 Engage and Empower Employees through Education and Tools**

Design, source and implement educational programs and tools that will help employees build relationships and trust with community members including:

- Increase the overall understanding of Open Government in Guelph and identify opportunities to make changes to work processes or programs
- Encourage the use of plain language in all internal and external communications
- Make employees aware of effective ways to engage the community
- Develop organizational tolerance for reasonable risk taking and failure reporting
- Increase digital competency for practical day-to-day operation

We recommend providing City of Guelph employees and working groups with reasonable authority to quickly respond to citizen and stakeholder needs and requests. This would improve response time, build a confident and engaged workforce, and grow trust with the community.

### **2.3 Align Internal Talent Processes<sup>+</sup>**

Align recruitment practices, performance development plans and recognition programs with Open Government principles.

### **2.4 Cultivate Open Government Champions through a Community of Practice**

Cultivate Open Government champions by forming a Community of Practice including internal and external stakeholders to capture and share learning, communicate failure and celebrate successes.

### **2.5 Identify Open Government Activities in Service Areas and Department Annual Work Plans**

Require service areas and departments to identify Open Government aligned activities in their work plans, including but not limited to making data sets and information publicly available, digitizing government services to enable self-service functionality, and refining processes, policies and service standards to align with the principles of Open Government.

## ACTION 3. Open up City Hall

We will develop a platform that makes it easy for community members to understand and interact with local government through a highly searchable website that can be personalized based on individual interests and preferences<sup>+</sup>. MyGuelph will enable relevant and effective community engagement, provide a broad range of services online, take pressure off City resources and provide fast access to City data and services. To increase understanding of city hall works - departments will work to develop process maps that will outline how government services and decisions are made from beginning to end.

The key components of this ACTION include:

### 3.1 Personalized My.Guelph.ca online experience

Offer citizens the ability to personalize the My.Guelph.ca landing page to provide proactive updates for stakeholders based on selected interests and geographic preferences (e.g. MyNeighborhood, MyWard, MyCity). Citizens can register and identify preferred topics and methods of communication. Invites productive interaction with residents based on their specific interests (e.g. arts and culture, budgeting consultation, garbage schedule changes).

### 3.2 Create and Implement a Platform for Dialogue

Create and implement a dialogue platform where community stakeholders can offer opinions, crowdsource ideas<sup>+</sup>, contribute to policy making and vote on pertinent topics easily and in near real-time (e.g. participatory budgeting<sup>+</sup>).

### 3.3 Integrate e-Government Services

Plan for and integrate e-Government services with the MyGuelph platform as they roll out (see **Action 5. E-Government Services** for more).

### 3.4 Council Consultation App

Create an App that makes it easy to communicate with Council in near real-time. Provide online access to history of Council votes, motions and attendance.

<sup>+</sup> Projects identified by community stakeholders during Open Guelph Action Plan project consultation.

## **ACTION 4. Increase Community Engagement and Participation**

We will increase awareness of the role and benefits of an active civic community and encourage public participation with local government. Active citizenship is imperative in the success of Open Government in Guelph and a mandatory component of the Action Plan.

This ACTION includes the following components:

### **4.1 Move towards a Principle of Collaboration and Co-creation by Default**

Regularly empower the community in decision-making processes where appropriate, using the established Community Engagement Framework as a guide.

### **4.2 Civic Education Series<sup>+</sup>**

Educate community about how local government works, what various levels of government are responsible for and how to get involved starting with a civic education series.

### **4.3 Expand the Accessibility and Use of Innovative Engagement Tools**

Expand the further use of online tools (*Have Your Say*, online MindMixer platform) with user recognition and rewards and improve access to these tools by providing funding support to public access points including public libraries. Incorporate gamification principles into Open Government initiatives to make the online experience fun and rewarding.

### **4.4 Bring City Hall Services to People via Mobile City Hall and Pop-Up Engagement Activities**

Make government services more accessible by bringing City Hall to people through the use of a Mobile City Hall and Pop-Up engagement activities that meet community stakeholders where they live, work and play.

### **4.5 Explore New Ways to Collaborate with Stakeholders in the Budgeting Process**

Build on Guelph's legacy as the first municipality in North America to use participatory budgeting by exploring new ways to work with community stakeholders in the municipal budgeting process<sup>+</sup>.

<sup>+</sup> Projects identified by community stakeholders during Open Guelph Action Plan project consultation.

## **ACTION 5. Implement e-Government Services**

We will develop and provide digital government services to facilitate efficient service delivery and information requests. The City should maintain responsibility for providing online access to critical City services (e.g. emergency, medical services, EMS). For non-critical topics (e.g. culture/heritage map), the recommended approach is for the City of Guelph to enable and encourage community stakeholders & the private sector to develop creative solutions that address community issues and opportunities.

Specifically, this Action on e-Government Services consists of the following components:

### **5.1 Enable e-Government Services**

Automate residential and business inquiries and transactions where suitable (e.g. licensing applications, business-related service requests and city maintenance reporting e-service<sup>+</sup>).

### **5.2 AskGuelph<sup>+</sup>**

Build AskGuelph – a website search function with the necessary content to provide clear answers to questions about local government.

### **5.3 Alerts on Garbage Collection Schedule<sup>+</sup>**

Provide mobile-friendly updates about what is being picked up (garbage, compost, recycling, yard waste) on what day including the estimated time of arrival of your garbage truck.

### **5.4 Grass Cutting Schedule**

Make grass cutting schedule updates available on Guelph.ca

### **5.5 Community Events and Programs Schedule**

Release City of Guelph community events and program schedule to generate awareness and facilitate the development of community-built apps.

### **5.6 Moving to an 'Any City Counter, Any Service' Approach**

Develop technology infrastructure to accommodate a broad range of service requests at all City service locations.

### **5.7 Co-operate with Provincial and Federal Government Partners to Offer Seamless Service Delivery for Citizens**

Identify and advocate the removal of barriers and move towards seamless intergovernmental service delivery. Collaborate with Service Ontario and Service Canada to find ways to better integrate service access.

+ Projects identified by community stakeholders during Open Guelph Action Plan project consultation.

## ACTION 6. Make Data and Information Public Assets

We will share City data and information with accessible, open standards. This ACTION is imperative in graduating the City of Guelph into the 'Government as a Platform' mode of operation. By opening up City data and providing opportunities for agencies and community stakeholders to share their data and resources, the City is making it easier for community stakeholders to participate in creating innovative solutions for city challenges.

This ACTION includes the following components:

### 6.1 Open Up and Release City Data

Open up City data unless there are privacy, security or legal reasons for not doing so. This includes the creation of open data policies and standards with the following considerations:

- **Sharing-induced licensing** (e.g. adopting the Pan-Canadian Open Government Licence)
- **Administrative policies** requiring department and service areas to keep data current with reasonable effort
- **Open source procurement policies** to encourage the use of open source software when possible
- **Metadata Standards** to create standardized ways to categorize City information and machine-readable data to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the management, sharing and using of City data

### 6.2 Create an Information Management Infrastructure to Catalogue Shareable City of Guelph Data

Establish an information management infrastructure to manage pertinent information in digital formats, including documents, records and digital assets with priority content around financial information (e.g. budgets) and Council decisions (e.g. bylaws and votes).

Create a catalogue of sharable City of Guelph data that includes an easy-to-understand inventory and classification system and takes into consideration:

- **Readiness to Share** – For data sets that can be shared: are they already in a digital format, accurate, current, and in public consumable formats and languages
- **Benefiting Stakeholders** – Which stakeholder group(s) would be interested in this data set and why?
- **Value to Stakeholders** – What is the importance of this data set to the benefiting stakeholders?
- **Ownership** – Which department or service area within the City is responsible for the maintenance and publishing of the data set(s)?

We will create an opportunity for developers, end users and City employees to discuss the app development process and usability of data sets in an online forum.

### 6.3 Establish an Open Data Committee

Establish an open data committee to develop and implement policies and standards based on the Open by Default principle. The Open Data Committee would also take on the task of creating guidelines and processes to ensure appropriate expectations are set with internal and external stakeholders including rights of usage, responsibilities and standards on data currency, accuracy and format (e.g. digital format, not in niche business jargon or abbreviated codes).

### 6.4 Develop Infrastructure and Application Programming Interfaces (API's)

Develop infrastructure and mobile or desktop application programming interfaces (API's) to house and enable interaction with data sets (e.g. data feeds). In addition to data sets, the City of Guelph open data platform can also include a catalogue of open source tools various stakeholders can build on to maximize productivity and impact.



## **6.5 Expand Catalogue to Include Community and Agency Owned Data**

Invite municipal agencies and community stakeholders to publish and maintain their data catalogues within the City of Guelph platform in order to centralize sharable data within the Guelph community and to induce sharing and usage of data sets beyond those owned by the City of Guelph.

## **6.6 Proactively Identify and Publish Information Related to Accountability**

In a centralized and user-friendly way, proactively identify and publish, information related to accountability (e.g. expenditures, contracts, FOI requests).

+ Projects identified by community stakeholders during Open Guelph Action Plan project consultation.

# Roadmap

The six multi-phased ACTIONS can be further divided into 35 projects in digestible sizes. The sequencing of projects takes into careful consideration the foundational activities (e.g. technology infrastructure) that need to take place before certain Open Government benefits (e.g. open data) can be realized. The roadmap also strikes a balance between longer-term, infrastructure work and early demonstration projects (e.g. Council consultation application, garbage collection alerts) to build momentum and buy-in for the necessary investment in and community support for Open Government. Below is an overview of the projects, timing and sequencing, followed by project details:

