

COMMITTEE REPORT



TO **Governance Committee**

SERVICE AREA Corporate and Human Resources, City Clerks Department
DATE November 13, 2012

SUBJECT Open Government Framework
REPORT NUMBER CHR-2012-55

SUMMARY

Purpose of Report:

To provide historical context and a rationale for Open Government and to outline a proposed Open Government Framework from which to build an Open Government Action Plan for the City of Guelph.

Committee Action:

To recommend to Council the approval of an Open Government Framework for the City of Guelph.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Open Government Framework for the City of Guelph, enclosed as part of the November 13, 2012 report entitled *Open Government Framework*, be approved.

BACKGROUND

Through the City's development of a [Corporate Technology Strategic Plan](#) (approved by Council on September 24, 2012), it was identified that the IT pillar of Open Government was a component of a much larger strategic objective. As a result, it was determined that staff would further consider Open Government by way of developing a conceptual framework for the City. Open Government is also supported by the Corporate Strategic Plan Framework (approved by Council on June 25, 2012) as it directly relates to several strategic directions under the focus areas of Organizational Excellence, Innovation in Local Government and City Building.

This report will provide a high level summary and overview of the proposed Open Government Framework. The *Survey of Open Government* (Attachment 1) will provide for a more detailed account in relation to the historical evolution of Open

Government and its current context. It also illustrates related initiatives which have been successfully led by a number of jurisdictions. The context included in the paper will serve to provide greater clarity in regards to the proposed Open Government Framework below.

The proposed Open Government Framework can be used as the basis from which to develop an Open Government Action Plan for the City. An Action Plan is necessary as it will allow for a focused use of resources in the preparation of a work plan and implementation schedule. The work plan will propose several new initiatives built on best practice and industry trends in order to supplement existing City programs and services which already support the principles of Open Government. As a long-term strategic focus for the City, Open Government has the potential to be transformational. The proposed framework is a foundational element to inform a strategic roadmap to achieve this vision.

Drivers

As part of an [Open Government Summit in 2010](#), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published the following as the key benefits of Open Government:

- Establishing greater trust in government
- Ensuring better outcomes at less cost
- Raising compliance levels
- Ensuring equity of access to public policy making
- Fostering innovation and new economic activity
- Enhancing effectiveness by leveraging knowledge and resources of citizens

Further detail regarding the context and rationale for Open Government can be found in the attached paper.

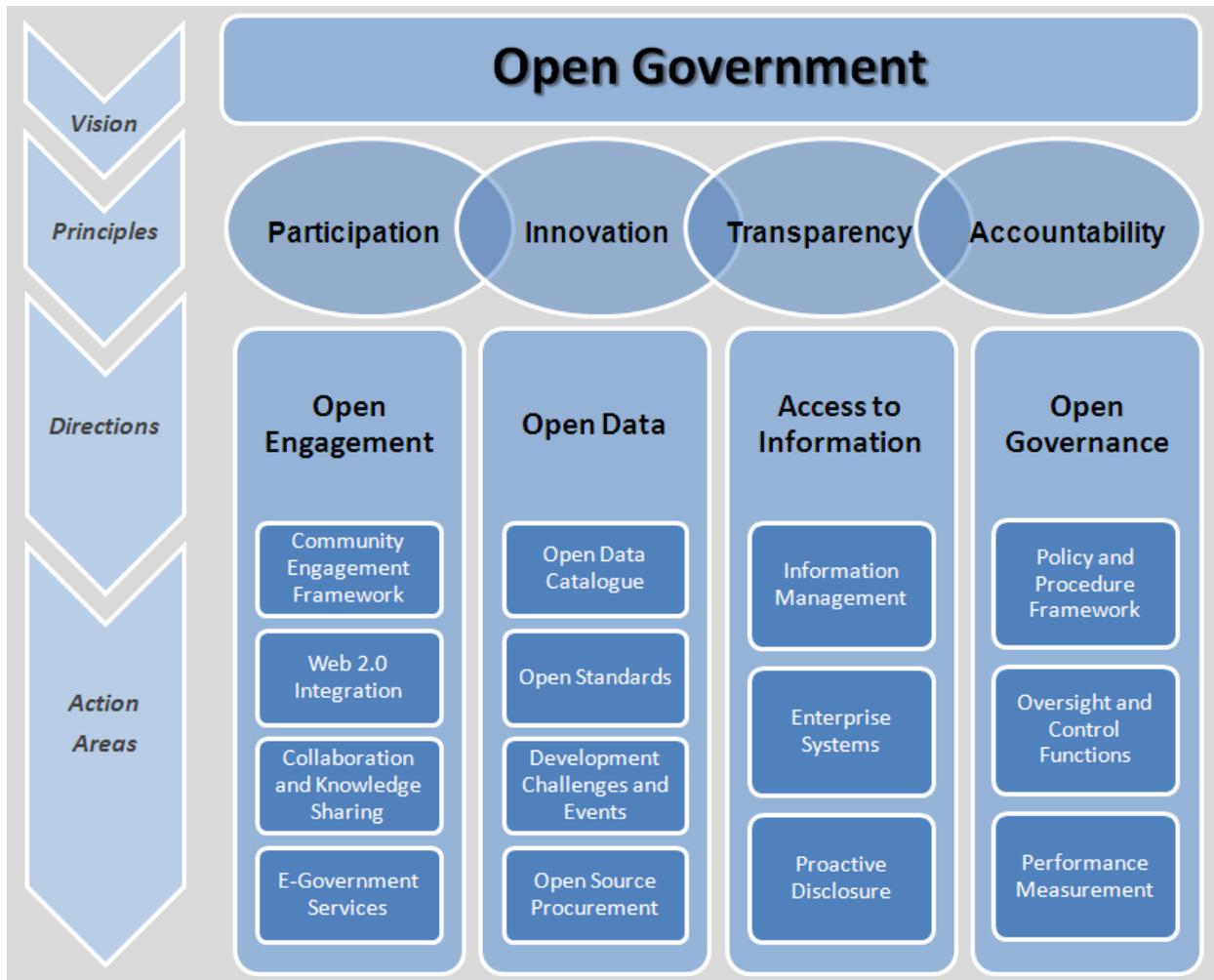
REPORT

Open Government is a movement which seeks to enhance the overall transparency and accountability of government. It is also an attempt to improve the connection between government and citizens - not only to increase democratic participation but also to encourage and support innovation and economic development. Open Government is facilitated by technology but is being driven through public expectation. Related changes are evident in the private sector and in the formation of grassroots and global partnerships focused on moving the agenda forward. Government at all levels have already begun to embrace this new reality, but progress is most apparent at the local levels, especially in Canada.

The implementation of Open Government requires a strategic approach. There are a number of interrelated directions that must be in place to support the overall principles and vision. Consultation with the community around action planning is a key component to the success of any Open Government program. In order to consider an Action Plan, it is necessary to first provide a conceptual account of Open Government through the development of a framework. Within the proposed

framework, the vision of Open Government is supported by four interrelated principles driven through four key directions. There are a number of action areas tied to these directions, however, these are not meant to be exhaustive lists - they are identified only to provide central themes which may be used to inform further development.

The following section provides a summary of the proposed Open Government Framework for the City of Guelph. The attached paper references various examples in an attempt to better operationalize the concepts below.



Vision

The following definition attempts to classify Open Government as a broad and dynamic concept for the City of Guelph.

OPEN GOVERNMENT: To create a fully transparent and accountable City which leverages technology and empowers the community to generate added value as well as participate in the development of innovative and meaningful solutions.

Principles

The vision of Open Government is underpinned by four principles, established in order to provide further clarity and to more fully inform the development of an 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 through the provision of solutions co-created for the purpose of realizing a shared reward. 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.

Directions

The principles of Open Government are driven through four key directions. Within each direction there are a number of action areas which can encompass a myriad of related initiatives. The attached report references a handful of these initiatives in an attempt to better clarify these areas.

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.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed Open Government Framework establishes a conceptual foundation with which to develop a comprehensive Open Government Action Plan in support of several strategic directions within the Corporate Strategic Plan Framework (2012-2016):

Organizational Excellence

- 1.2 Develop collaborative work teams and apply whole systems thinking to deliver creative solutions
- 1.3 Build robust systems, structures and frameworks aligned to strategy

Innovation in Local Government

- 2.2 Deliver Public Service better
- 2.3 Ensure accountability, transparency and engagement

City Building

- 3.2 Be economically viable, resilient, diverse and attractive for business
- 3.3 Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An expansion request of \$100,000 is included as part of the 2013 budget process in order to retain the services of a subject matter expert to work with the City Clerk and a Collaborative Work Team to develop a comprehensive Open Government Action Plan for the City of Guelph. The Action Plan would set out a strategic implementation program for various Open Government initiatives based on the proposed framework, a best practice review and an internal state readiness assessment. It will address project management, governance, and resourcing when considering deliverables and a related project timetable. The Action Plan will also reference the City's strategy and policy framework to ensure that future initiatives are aligned appropriately.

DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION

The following interim collaborative work team was struck in order to provide input and support to the development of the proposed Open Government Framework:

- City Clerk (Chair)
- Deputy Clerk
- Manager of Information Technology
- Corporate Manager, Strategic Planning and Corporate Initiatives
- Manager of Communications

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- Senior Communications and Issues Management Coordinator
 - Manager of Integrated Services, Community & Social Services
 - Deputy City Solicitor
 - Access, Privacy and Records Specialist
 - Economic Development Marketing Coordinator
 - Supervisor, Financial Planning
 - General Manager, Planning and Building Services
 - Manager, Development Planning

Subject to Council's approval, members of this group will be used as a resource in the development of an Open Government Action Plan. Community engagement will also be a key component to inform the plan. As part of the strategic development process, further consideration will be given to work teams and governance structures which are required to support implementation.

COMMUNICATIONS

Corporate Communications will assist in the development of a communications plan to support an Open Government Action Plan (subject to approval). The plan's communications tactics may include:

- Dedicated web pages on guelph.ca
- Messaging through a variety of social media channels
- Media relations
- Internal communications
- Public engagement opportunities
- Advertising and promotion

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: *A Survey of Open Government*, November 13, 2012, Blair Labelle, City Clerk

Prepared and Recommended By:

Blair Labelle
City Clerk,
Corporate and Human Resources
519 822-1260 x 2232
blair.labelle@guelph.ca

Recommended By:

Mark Amorosi
Executive Director,
Corporate and Human Resources
519 822-1260 x 2281
mark.amorosi@guelph.ca