

# STAFF REPORT



TO Public Services Committee

SERVICE AREA Public Services

DATE April 7, 2015

**SUBJECT Guelph Wellbeing Final Report**

REPORT NUMBER PS-15-15

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide a formal conclusion to Guelph Wellbeing, to report on specific activities that will continue within existing workplans, and to highlight some of the project learnings.

### KEY FINDINGS

Guelph Wellbeing created the Community Engagement Framework, demonstrated Guelph as an innovative leader in the adoption of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and worked with stakeholders on four community-identified issues: food security, affordable housing, physical and social connectivity. Project implementation experienced challenges in project management, communication and the readiness and capacity of the community to work in a collective impact framework.

Funding for Guelph Wellbeing from the strategic funding reserve ended in 2014. Drawing from the strengths of Guelph Wellbeing and community capacity, City staff has crafted a transition plan with three main components:

1. Continue to measure community wellbeing using the Canadian Index of Wellbeing
2. Bring together advocacy efforts directed to other levels of government on issues such as affordable housing.
3. Support key community-identified actions in each of the compelling case reports (Food Security, Affordable Housing, Physical and Social Connectivity) within existing groups and existing resources.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications

### ACTION REQUIRED

To receive the staff report

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## RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Public Services Report # PS-15-15 "Guelph Wellbeing Final Report" dated April 7, 2015 be received

## BACKGROUND

In 2011 under Council direction, Report # CSS-SS-1019 outlined a Social Services Workplan that included a Community Wellness (Wellbeing) Plan. Report # CSS-CESS-1136 tabled in September 2011 describes Guelph Wellbeing as having a corporate facing component focused on the development of the Community Engagement Framework, and a community facing component. A subsequent report in June 2012, (Report # FIN-12-32) approved three years of funding, \$440,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Reserve.

Report # CSS-CESS-1326 approved June 11, 2013 noted that the Community Wellbeing Initiative (re-branded as Guelph Wellbeing) has residents at the centre - how to engage them, how to serve them better and how to improve the wellbeing of this community. The anticipated outcomes included:

- A Community Wellbeing Plan that complements the City's Strategic Plan and Official Plan;
- An engaged community working to achieve the vision of the Community Wellbeing Plan;
- A stronger relationship between the City and the community, developed through a new civic engagement model;
- City and community services that are delivered in an efficient and effective manner;
- A tool for proactive advocacy with the provincial and federal governments; and
- New collaborative partnerships to achieve positive results through innovation.

## REPORT

Guelph Wellbeing (GW) was an ambitious, visionary undertaking at a time when the City was just beginning to define its role in the human services issues facing Guelph, separate from but complementary to the County's role as the legislated consolidated municipal service manager. Over the four years of the initiative, GW:

- Complemented the Corporate Strategic Plan as a "frame changer" initiative;
- Engaged the community in the development of the vision, and goals, garnering 3,000+ inputs and an ongoing stakeholder list of 400 supporters;
- Implemented the Corporate Community Engagement Framework (Report # CSS-CESS-1315) to increase resident decision making in City projects;

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- Developed Compelling Case reports on community-identified priorities in Food Security, Affordable Housing, Physical and Social Connectivity. Thirteen shared actions are outlined to improve service;
- Supported advocacy efforts related to Affordable Housing (Report # CSS-CESS-1356),
- Established partnerships with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing ([here](#)), igniting interest across the country in the measurement of wellbeing at a local level;
- Partnered in the launch of Guelph Enterprise (Report # CSS-CESS- 1419) and Health Links (Report # CSS-CESS 1422).

The City has played a community engagement, convening, funding, research and project management role in GW. While we are formally wrapping up the initiative, there are still legacy actions to pursue. On the corporate facing side of Guelph Wellbeing, the Community Engagement Framework continues to be implemented, providing training, support and mentorship to staff, and an annual report describing this work is slated to come to Public Services Committee later this year.

The City has used the results from the 130 responses to a stakeholder survey ([here](#)), as well as conversations with the Guelph Wellbeing Leadership Group to inform the elements of GW that can continue within existing resources.

## City's Commitment to Wellbeing

Funding for Guelph Wellbeing from the strategic funding reserve ended in 2014. Drawing from the strengths of GW and community capacity, City staff has crafted a transition plan with three main components:

- 1 Measurement of community wellbeing using the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.** We are working with a recent Trillium-funded initiative, Toward Common Ground, which consists of 12 organizations working together more intentionally and strategically to understand, address and strengthen our ability for meaningful impact. We are exploring the use of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, as well as other like and complementary tools, in our work. Along with our participation in Toward Common Ground, we are discussing a second administration of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing Household Survey.
- 2 Advocacy efforts on community wellbeing priorities with other levels of government on issues such as affordable housing.** We continue to work with the City's Inter-governmental Affairs Officer to identify an advocacy agenda that supports the efforts of existing groups locally such as the Poverty Elimination Task Force, as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).
- 3 Support key actions identified in each of the Compelling Case reports within existing groups and existing resources.** The Compelling Case reports are the culmination of our work with community stakeholders on the

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issues and joint actions they identified as important to increasing awareness and impact on these important issues, specifically:

## Food Security

- Work with community leaders in existing processes to develop The Seed community food hub and a Food Strategy

## Physical Connectivity

- Work with City staff and community leaders to make existing data on physical connectivity more readily available to inform action on active transportation
- Invite community leaders to inform the development of the City's Transportation Master Plan Update and active transportation network.

## Affordable Housing

- Work with City staff and community leaders to develop the City's Affordable Housing Strategy, including a policy to inform the use of the City's Affordable Housing Reserve Funds.
- Investigate affordable housing pilots such as home sharing, and host a community workshop on social finance, including social impact bonds.

## Social Connectivity

- Continue to work on shared measurement systems.
- Participate in the shared space survey being conducted by 10 Carden by encouraging community benefit organizations to look for ways to share space and resources.
- Consider building greater capacity for not-for-profits to evaluate their work by providing workshops and accessing graduate students to support evaluation activities; specifically, to make connections so the Executive Director Network could host such workshops.

## Lessons to Carry Forward

Guelph Wellbeing has made a positive contribution to the quality of life in Guelph, informed many City Strategies, modelled multi-stakeholder collaboration toward collective impact, and enhanced the City's reputation as an innovative municipal leader. The Guelph Wellbeing Initiative was ambitious. We recognize that this is an emerging field and this type of work takes a long time and significant resources to demonstrate progress. The GW Leadership Group in their discussions underscored the importance of the City's role in providing civic leadership to the issues identified in GW and to catalyzing the process itself.

## **Engagement**

Guelph Wellbeing spawned an era of more authentic and meaningful engagement at the City. It generated an unprecedented 3,000 + inputs through a wide range of methods. The creation of the Community Engagement Framework was one of the

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deliverables of the initiative and to date, the Council-approved framework supports engagement in more than 34 city projects annually. It formed the basis of the City's successful engagement practices of today like Open Government. The City provided leadership to bring together residents, Executive Directors of social service agencies, business, and education to form a multi-sectorial group of leaders, unlike any group convened to date, to set goals and to champion wellbeing.

As one GW Leadership Group member noted:

"this engagement had the ability to shape common understandings and action strategies that emerged from having a shared lens, and that had the power to inform the work of multiple groups and organizations to mutually beneficial effect. In a very real sense, it was an opportunity for the community to come together and articulate shared concerns and insights with the City as a facilitative agent rather than an agenda setter".

## **Championed and enhanced existing strategies and programs**

Guelph Wellbeing has been instrumental in the re-design of the Community Investment Strategy's Community Grants (Report # CSS-CESS-1334) and in the development of both the Older Adult (Report # CSS-CESS-1228) and Youth Strategies (Report # CSS-CESS-133). Survey respondents noted that it brought new people into the conversation, increased networking, and brought together groups of people to think differently about local issues. Guelph Wellbeing stakeholders have underscored the importance of existing Masterplans related to Cycling and Transportation, and programs such as Community Gardens and Community Paramedicine. During the transition period, there have been opportunities to contribute to the City's emerging Affordable Housing Strategy (PBEE-2014.7).

## **Innovation**

The adoption of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) and the development of a platform for wellbeing distinguished Guelph amongst other communities. As an early adopter of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, Guelph has provided support to the Ontario Association of Community Health Centres, Community Foundations of Canada and most recently, the Ontario Trillium Foundation in the incorporation of the CIW in their work. The partnership between the City of Guelph and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing was recognized in 2013 by the Community Indicators Consortium for an Impact Award.

Guelph Wellbeing participated in the development of The Guelph Enterprise, a human services response to those at elevated risk initiated by Guelph Police Services. It also aligned with Health Links, a provincial pilot in primary health care focused on better meeting the needs of complex patients with high levels of usage.

Conversations at the GW Leadership Group noted how the concept of wellbeing can create a competitive advantage for Guelph:

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"GW can be a model for a more sophisticated and strategic focus on marketing Guelph. It broadened our understanding of what wellbeing means, and created new relationships (and therefore opportunities) that will be useful over the long term... Guelph's overall wellbeing is a core, uniting and continuing interest with many community groups, including the Chamber of Commerce and leading local employers. The city shouldn't lose the theme because it can differentiate Guelph and help attract and retain new businesses, skilled labour and new post-secondary graduates"

## **Setting goals and measuring progress**

Guelph Wellbeing championed the importance of measuring wellbeing and its important contribution to complementing the financial and economic measures of a successful city. GW launched Canada's first household survey based on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing which provides a comprehensive baseline to track community progress in the eight domains of wellbeing. Data from the survey was used in the Older Adult Strategy development, and the South End Recreation Centre project. The eight wellbeing domains are also used by the City to ensure business cases are developed with clear and measurable goals for residents, which enhances transparency and accountability. This is an area where we can continue to build.

## **Project Management**

Alongside the positive contributions of Guelph Wellbeing, it is noted that the project faced some fundamental project management challenges. It lacked a clear concise business case to describe the scope of the plan that was rooted in the current community context. It is complicated to plan comprehensively for wellbeing in Guelph over the short term, working with community champions who cross various geographic boundaries.

We know from best practices and our own experience with complex community initiatives that resources need to be matched to the scope and scale of the initiative. For instance, the project did not have a budget for supporting new ideas identified through engagement, yet this was something that the community expected. In the survey, stakeholders noted slow pace of change and complexity of the plan as challenges in GW.

In addition to the overall management of the project, the project manager was responsible for working directly with the community working groups, the Leadership Group and providing clerical and communication functions, which strained capacity.

## **Communication**

There is widespread appeal to the idea of community wellbeing, but it proved to be difficult to decide and then to communicate specifically what Guelph Wellbeing was to achieve and the best way to proceed to do so. Survey respondents noted the initiative lacked a clear, concise purpose. This was further complicated by the

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diverse range of stakeholders engaged over the course of the initiative. GW was successful in generating ideas for actions, but challenged to hone the focus on do-able activities groups could undertake together without external support.

## **Collective Impact and data**

Collective impact is a best practice that underscores the importance of commitment to a shared vision and alignment of activities to create meaningful community change. Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported ensures learning and accountability. Building trust and capacity to measure and use data is complex and requires a significant investment of time and expertise to reap benefits. The stakeholder survey noted that: *"63% had no idea, or slightly an idea about how groups could share data in GW."* Fortunately, there may be an opportunity to begin to build this capacity through the Toward Common Ground initiative.

There is much to learn from the initiative, some successes, some things that still continue to add value, and some things that did not go as well as originally hoped. All of this learning is valuable. Moving forward, the City is committed to working with the community to continue the actions identified in the City's commitment to wellbeing, continuing to value wellbeing, and working to achieving it together.

## **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

### Organizational Excellence

- 1.1 Engage employees through excellence in leadership
- 1.2 Develop collaborative work team and apply whole systems thinking to deliver creative solutions
- 1.3 Build robust systems, structures and frameworks aligned to strategy

### Innovation in Local Government

- 2.1 Build an adaptive environment, for government innovation to ensure fiscal and service sustainability
- 2.2 Deliver Public Service better
- 2.3 Ensure accountability, transparency and engagement

### City Building

- 3.1 Ensure a well designed, safe, inclusive, appealing and sustainable City
- 3.2 Be economically viable, resilient, diverse and attractive for business
- 3.3 Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications

## **DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION**

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services  
Transportation Demand Management and Planning  
Guelph Wellbeing Leadership Group

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Toward Common Ground Project Manager

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communication sent to Guelph Wellbeing distribution list  
Key messages prepared for the Guelph Wellbeing Leadership Group members  
Guelph Wellbeing website content updated

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