



# **City of Guelph 2007 Community Strategic Plan**

## **Phase 2 – Strategic Listening Results**

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	3
1.0 Phase 2 – Strategic Listening .....	5
1.1 Purpose and Actions .....	5
1.2 Departmental Focus Group Results.....	6
1.2.1 Method .....	6
1.2.2 Schedule .....	6
1.2.3 Session Management.....	6
1.2.4 Materials.....	6
1.2.5 Summary of Results.....	7
1.3 Public Meeting Results .....	17
1.3.1 Method .....	17
1.3.2 Schedule .....	17
1.3.3 Session Management.....	17
1.3.4 Materials.....	18
1.3.5 Summary of Results .....	18
1.4 General Public Survey .....	25
1.4.1. Method .....	25
1.4.2 Schedule .....	25
1.4.3 Survey Procedure .....	25
1.4.4 Results: Summary Data Tables.....	26
1.5 Challenge to the Youth of Guelph .....	32
1.6 Additional Submissions .....	32
1.7 Conclusion .....	32
1.8 Appendices .....	33

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Strategic Listening is the second phase of the approved 2007 community strategic plan process for the City of Guelph. Through a series of focus group discussions with staff, public meetings and a general public survey that was translated into nine different languages, aspirations for the future of Guelph and innovative suggestions have been captured from a wide range of staff, residents and community stakeholders.

It is important to note that all information contained herein is considered directional and indicative in nature only and not statistically reliable. Mayor Farbridge, Council and the Senior Management Team (SMT) of Guelph will be provided with this report for review and consideration in advance of the development of a new vision, themes and goals to effectively guide City operations well into the future.

Included in this summary report is the following:

- 1.2 Departmental focus group results
- 1.3 Public meeting results
- 1.4 General public survey results
- 1.5 Challenge to Youth information
- 1.6 Summaries of additional submissions

The findings provide information on the strengths of the City, opportunities for improvement, possible actions, priorities and ideas for strengthening a new strategic plan in terms of content and how it is communicated to staff and the public.

Perceived strengths of the City are numerous and include the small town atmosphere, environmental focus, arts, culture and heritage, proximity to other urban centres, proactive and engaged citizenry and the presence of the University.

A number of thematic areas emerged from the data as opportunities for improvement and priorities for the City to address.

- **Transportation** - create a more transit friendly City for both vehicles and pedestrians, reduce the wait time for buses and provide more specialized transportation services.
- **Waste Management** - resolve outstanding waste management issues, consider a landfill site with the City's boundaries, rejuvenate the compostable waste management project and complete a 50 year waste water Master Plan.
- **Environment** – protect Guelph's natural resources, increase the urban forest by 20%, consider development of a formalized urban forest plan and specialized Department of the Environment.
- **Downtown** – address the safety concerns that residents have about the downtown area at night and consider having it accessible to pedestrians only with specialty shops and historic lighting.

- **Urban Planning** – strengthen development regulations and focus on improving the aesthetic quality of the City. Create clusters of community centres, continue collaborative planning with the community and create a reserve fund for unforeseen needs that will arise due to climate change.
- **Social Wellness** – ensure that the City is well prepared to meet the increasing service demands that an aging population will require, better connect with the various groups that make up the community, address the need for more social housing and consider development of a recreation centre in the south end of the City.
- **Management and Communications** – strengthen the enforcement of by-laws, create full time positions for Councillors and develop enhanced strategies to communicate the City's directions, accomplishments and continuing need for public involvement.
- **Growth Management** – retain and protect what is currently in Guelph and ensure that growth is not at the expense of trees, green spaces and parklands. Ensure control over the City's destiny through policies and strong civic leadership.
- **Tourism, Marketing and the Economy** – diversify the economy with new industry and executive level possibilities, create more cultural events in the downtown area and investigate eco and agri-tourism opportunities.
- **Financial Management** – decrease the tax level and create options for urban stewardship - apply private wealth to the public good with opportunities for investment in the City.
- **Service Delivery** – improve service coordination and delivery to the community and assess the requirements for updating infrastructure including sidewalks, storage and recreation facilities.
- **Innovation and Leadership** – support and champion innovations in health care and the environment.

Suggestions with respect to the new strategic plan include ensuring that it is well communicated with regular report cards to both the staff and public. The new plan should include metrics, a clear implementation plan, information on how citizens can become involved and what their role is in reaching the identified goals.

Overall, the results of Strategic Listening efforts have provided valuable information from staff, the general public and stakeholders which will help to inform creation of the draft 2007 community strategic plan.

## **1.0 Phase 2 – Strategic Listening**

### **1.1 Purpose and Actions**

The purpose of Phase 2 was to gather information and input from the general public, Councillors, the Senior Management Team and various community stakeholders on the key issues, challenges and priorities for the future of Guelph.

To that end, a number of actions were undertaken:

- Five departmental focus group discussions were held with staff
- Six public meetings were held
- A general public survey was issued - an electronic survey was designed and posted on the intranet and external website in 10 different languages; surveys were distributed at various meetings and locations in the City and were issued electronically to students at the University; Council and the Senior Management team contacted randomly selected residents via the telephone with the survey questions; a number of community stakeholders were also interviewed via the telephone
- A challenge was issued to the youth of Guelph to write, draw or build what they want the City to be in the future

All these actions were supplemented with a number of promotional efforts during the month of March – two radio interviews, a television appearance, editorial coverage in the local newspapers, newsletters of various community organizations including the Guelph Arts Council and Guelph Public Library.

## 1.2 Departmental Focus Group Results

### 1.2.1 Method

Five staff focus groups were held over a two day period to gather the thoughts and opinions of staff with respect to the future of Guelph and the current strategic plan.

### 1.2.2 Schedule

Date: March 9 <sup>th</sup> Location: Council Committee Room A	<b>1. Focus Group:</b> Operations – 8 participants <b>2. Focus Group:</b> Corporate Services – 6 participants
Date: March 12 <sup>th</sup> Location: Council Committee Room B	<b>3. Focus Group:</b> Community Design and Development and Human Resources – 10 participants <b>4. Focus Group:</b> Emergency and Environmental Services - 13 participants <b>5. Focus Group:</b> Community Services and Finance – 9
Total participants = 46	

### 1.2.3 Session Management

- Planning and Supervision: Brenda Boisvert, Manager, Strategic Planning and Corporate Initiatives
- Facilitator: Glenn Pothier, Consultant, Strategic Plan
- Glenn provided opening remarks and an introduction to the meetings along with an overview of focus group content and procedures
- Brenda provided a presentation on the strategic planning process and covered the following areas:
  - a) History of strategic planning efforts at the City
  - b) Community consultation and involvement in the process
  - c) Strategic plan framework development
  - d) Plans for validation of the draft framework
  - e) Project timelines and next steps

### 1.2.4 Materials

A slide deck of the strategic plan presentation was given to participants for review. Questions were posed to the group in the following areas:

1. Guelph in context – strengths, weaknesses, key trends, factors for consideration, potential opportunities and threats
2. Issues, priorities and a look to the future – what needs to start or stop happening, key goals and objectives, what should the City look like in 20 years?
3. Defining success - an assessment of the current plan – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement

### 1.2.5 Summary of Results

#### A. Positive attributes and strengths to build upon

- Small town family feel/atmosphere with all the amenities
- Proximity of the two rivers
- Many nature trails, parks and open spaces – no massive concrete buildings
- The preservation of its history is a source of pride for Guelph
- Growing environmental sensitivity
- Relative safety of the City is good and the crime rate is low
- Don't have the big city freeways to contend with
- Ability to keep growing but still keep it small-town
- Ability to drive across the City of Guelph quickly
- Good proximity to other urban areas
- Several types of entertainment are available
- The current size of the City should be maintained
- The University is a strong asset to the City offering many opportunities
- Retail units have been well integrated
- Single tier city – political layers are close to the community
- Innovative community that is not afraid to take a risk (e.g wet dry plant)
- Proactive and involved community with active neighbourhood groups
- Effective provision of services including fire, police and ambulance
- A clean and well-kept City
- Well preserved architecture and heritage – (e.g John McCrae house)
- The view from our Lady Church is the highest view in Guelph – there are no taller buildings
- Guelph has a feeling of 'comfort' – newcomers can immediately feel at home
- People usually bump into someone they know in the City
- There is a great deal of caring in the community – many grass roots organizations doing great things for the City
- Strong arts community with many working artists - independent cultural scene
- A lot of traditional values – 'tradition based but not tradition bound'
- Strong sense of community and connectedness that tends to keep people in Guelph
- Unique downtown with a lot of potential that has survived well in comparison to other municipalities
- A strong and stable City/corporation
- More affordable housing than surrounding areas
- University community – the University brings international exposure and local jobs
- People have a tendency to stay in the City

- Active neighborhood groups
- Centre for agricultural and veterinarian medicine
- Reputation for being environmental focused
- More affordable housing than surrounding areas
- Guelph is involved in a lot of initiatives for self improvement
- Many educational opportunities
- Good fire protection
- Innovative wet/dry system in place in recent years
- Agricultural city
- Heritage and stone architecture in the downtown area
- Good industrial base
- Population doubled since 1960s
- Not growing at an alarming rate
- Strong spirit of volunteerism
- Victorian homes with large lots
- Proximity to grand river; freshwater lakes and country
- More high tech jobs have become available
- Guelph is catching up on a wage level with other areas
- A number of companies in the agricultural space coming here
- North Wellington residents view Guelph as a commercial centre
- Nationally Guelph is seen as progressive
- The Guelph Community Energy Plan is innovative and progressive
- Guelph enjoys national recognition through Councillor Gloria Kovach and her role with the FCM
- Recognized municipal leader on many fronts
- The Hillside Festival is known around the world
- The City's agri-food industry is strong
- The turf grass institute
- Proximity of Guelph to the 401 – and it's proximity to the water, the railways, and the Wellington Airport.

## B. Opportunities for improvement

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
Traffic and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that traffic lights are sequenced e.g. Hamilton – frequent stops on the Hanlon create pollution</li> <li>▪ Create a more transit friendly City</li> <li>▪ Improve access to transportation – ensure improved commuter rail service and airport access</li> <li>▪ Improve access from the North to the South end; there are too many traffic lights</li> <li>▪ Develop a linkage system between the trains and the buses</li> <li>▪ Ensure shorter intervals for bus routes</li> </ul>



Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve inter-city transit</li> <li>▪ Reduce the amount of traffic congestion</li> <li>▪ Address the growing need for specialized transportation services</li> <li>▪ Continue to promote the use of Guelph transit and the fact that the City is using bio-fuel</li> </ul>
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resolve the City's waste management issues</li> <li>▪ Rejuvenate the compostable waste management project</li> <li>▪ Improve the management of waste water</li> <li>▪ Complete the 50 year Master plan at waste water</li> <li>▪ Continue sorting our garbage into 3 different systems</li> <li>▪ Create a landfill site in Guelph</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide tax incentives for businesses that are becoming more environmentally friendly</li> <li>▪ Install smart electric meters in each house</li> <li>▪ Complete a strategic plan for solid waste with every possible option on the table</li> <li>▪ Consider new technologies and new ways of looking at things</li> <li>▪ Encourage people to get out of their cars – promote use/benefit of public transit – anti-idling campaigns</li> <li>▪ Improve greenland, public spaces and park maintenance levels</li> <li>▪ Link Guelph trails with the rest of the Canada trail</li> </ul>
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create more housing in the downtown area and necessary facilities</li> <li>▪ Address the lack of parking and poor business hours in the downtown</li> <li>▪ Create more parking in the downtown area e.g. Baker Street Parking Garage</li> <li>▪ Remove the parking meters downtown</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the downtown businesses encourage shopping by opening and closing at the same times and reduce parking enforcement</li> <li>▪ Decrease the number of bars in the downtown area – it is too rough and a drain on the fire and police services</li> <li>▪ Create more commercial and residential opportunities in the downtown area</li> <li>▪ The downtown should continue to be a priority</li> <li>▪ Shift focus from the downtown area to development throughout the City and service everyone</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote mixed use development and create</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<p>opportunities to live, work and shop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce vitality into neighborhoods so that they are integrated and not isolated</li> <li>▪ New development should be planned for pedestrian traffic</li> <li>▪ Strengthen policy development in the planning area – developers are setting the terms of reference instead of staff</li> <li>▪ Decide on a vision for builders</li> <li>▪ Address the sameness of subdivisions</li> </ul>
Social Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take measures to curb a seemingly more lawless and violent city</li> <li>▪ Improve community safety and policing – consider the creation of a shift from 10:00 p.m.-3:00 a.m</li> <li>▪ Improve City By-law Enforcement to deal with smaller - non life threatening issues</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the City is well prepared for the aging population – need to rethink transportation, roads for seniors, whether people will be able to pay their taxes, whether there is enough health care services and professionals</li> <li>▪ Address the shortage of emergency care facilities and rethink how current ones are being utilized</li> <li>▪ Reward good citizens. Taxpayers are penalized by footing the bill for lawlessness (property standards, waste control, noise, water use). Every person should be required to be a good citizen (residential and corporate)</li> <li>▪ Ensure the presence of a community college</li> <li>▪ Build a second hospital</li> <li>▪ Address community divisiveness - people who work in Toronto want to relax here vs. those who live here and want stores and services close by; North vs. south end – make this better by bringing appropriate services</li> <li>▪ Focus on the generation that is currently growing up – develop strategies to keep our youth engaged, healthy and athletic</li> <li>▪ Ensure strategies and initiatives that work towards the health and well being of the community</li> <li>▪ Ensure the creation of different avenues to better connect with the various groups that make up the community</li> </ul>
Management and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarify the inaccurate perception that Guelph is becoming a bedroom community – only 14% of the working population commute to work according to</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<p>2001 statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empower staff by creating more Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) - give staff direction and let them get the job done</li> <li>▪ Create measures to retain talented and experienced staff</li> <li>▪ Ensure enhanced communication to all staff without access to email</li> <li>▪ Be prepared to back up decisions with money and resources and continue dialogue with staff</li> <li>▪ Communicate the need for public involvement</li> <li>▪ Improve relations with the County of Wellington</li> <li>▪ Focus on attracting and retaining good employees</li> <li>▪ Improve action on ideas raised. Stop talking and start doing</li> <li>▪ Be selective about the activities that we take on so that they are manageable; identify the most important things and work towards them</li> <li>▪ Decrease the amount of unresolved issues</li> <li>▪ Stop treating big city issues with a small town mentality</li> <li>▪ Educate staff and residents with marketing and targeted communication strategies; clarify the involvement of people; communicate the direction that we are going in; provide contacts and information on all the things we are striving towards; tell people what we are trying to accomplish</li> <li>▪ Ensure that Councillors focus on management of the City as a whole and not just their own area</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the Mayor and Councillors are held accountable – that they set an excellent example – staff deserve a well functioning Council</li> <li>▪ Provide more feedback and enlist a bottom up approach to management; consult the clients/residents first</li> <li>▪ Make Council full time for enhanced decision making</li> <li>▪ Have the Mayor appear on a weekly open forum televised program</li> </ul>
Growth Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that the small town feel is retained</li> <li>▪ Ensure that growth and expansion are not at the expense of trees, green spaces and park lands. London, Ontario is an excellent example of growth with nature in mind</li> <li>▪ Require that new development be designed for non-automobile traffic</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potable water – there must be an additional source considered as the City grows</li> <li>▪ Balance the rate of residential, industrial and commercial growth</li> <li>▪ Slow the pace of growth – new neighbourhoods do not match the older ones</li> <li>▪ Slow the pace of growth in the City</li> <li>▪ Ensure control over our destiny through our policies and strong civic leadership</li> <li>▪ Ensure good leadership and planning so that growth is not limited</li> <li>▪ Ensure that Guelph is not simply absorbed into the Region of Waterloo-Wellington</li> <li>▪ Ensure that our water supply is sufficient for the planned growth</li> <li>▪ Complete an effective growth management strategy</li> <li>▪ Create strategies to overcome any resistance to growth</li> </ul>
Innovation and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement bio-car initiatives – using bio degradable materials for cars will put Guelph on the map</li> <li>▪ Consider branding that demonstrates support for emerging technologies; values like innovation give people the freedom to be creative</li> <li>▪ Take advantage of opportunities to grow differently – mixed use development; become leaders in urban design</li> <li>▪ Improve and communicate the City’s examples of leadership</li> <li>▪ Support the City’s efforts to look at ways of increasing health e.g. ways of targeting childhood diabetes</li> </ul>
Tourism, Marketing and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage development of a conference hall</li> <li>▪ Improve the commercial base</li> <li>▪ Create more employment opportunities</li> <li>▪ Improve the ‘corporate presence’ in the City - there is a lack of higher paying local corporate job opportunities</li> <li>▪ Grow with small stores</li> <li>▪ Increase the size of the Farmers Market</li> <li>▪ Improve the location of the tourist office</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of tourist and recreational attractions in Guelph</li> <li>▪ Need to diversify the economy by bringing in outside industry</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve our ability to attract business - take measures to change the belief that Guelph is a difficult place to do business</li> <li>▪ Provide commercial and industrial land to support economic development</li> <li>▪ Ensure development of the new business park</li> <li>▪ Create a community marketing plan</li> <li>▪ Consider becoming more sector focused – tourism, film industry, agriculture, innovation – the trend is going in the direction of more niche marketing</li> <li>▪ Define who we want to be and go after it</li> <li>▪ Design the City so that people come to Guelph for shopping and dining</li> <li>▪ Encourage the development of a luxury hotel for people to stay at</li> </ul>
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decrease the tax level</li> <li>▪ Have other levels of government treat Guelph like a large City – ensure that we keep getting funds</li> </ul>
Service Delivery to the Community and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that health card and passport services are available in the City</li> <li>▪ Improve service coordination and delivery to the community (why not pick up all the garbage at once?)</li> <li>▪ Increase the staff compliment where feasible for further enhancements to service delivery</li> <li>▪ Assess and update infrastructure – sidewalk restoration needs to take place; storage and recreation facilities need upgrading; equipment is being exposed to the elements</li> <li>▪ Ensure that court services are on-line – easy and convenient for residents and stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Improve communications on the services that are provided (e.g. water and garbage)</li> <li>▪ Enable improved access for emergency vehicles in the winter months</li> <li>▪ Improve service planning in new growth areas – make it more convenient to live in Guelph</li> <li>▪ Examine the efficacy of current road calming initiatives (e.g. speed bumps can damage vehicles)</li> <li>▪ Look at ways to further enhance the delivery of services through reward and recognition</li> <li>▪ Take into account the increasing number of seniors when planning for service delivery</li> </ul>

### **C. Priorities to be addressed**

- Downtown
- Waste management
- Water supply and quality – look at alternate solutions
- Environmental sustainability and leadership
- Balancing growth and infrastructure
- Managing the character of Guelph - maintaining the comfort factor – the small town feel
- Protecting what is good in Guelph
- Developing a continuous improvement focused corporate culture
- Communicating our successes
- Improving transportation (pedestrians and vehicles)
- Creating new green space
- Maintaining a safe community
- Enhancing cultural and learning opportunities
- Ensuring open space systems (e.g. Boston, Paris and London)
- Anticipatory planning
- Increasing the number of health care facilities
- Increasing the commercial and industrial tax base – bring jobs to the City
- Reducing the number of regulations in the City

### **D. Dreams for a future Guelph**

- Excellent communications with residents and stakeholders
- World class transportation system
- A much greener environment
- Drinking water that comes from the tap
- People out of their houses and involved in the community
- Young people who are engaged, healthy and athletic
- A city of opportunity and balance – attract the right type of people and entertainment
- A retained small town atmosphere
- A complete community with many opportunities within the City boundaries
- The highest rate of waste diversion of any other municipality
- A higher ratio of businesses to residential
- Fiscally sound with a strong employment base in the community
- Improved community designs and public spaces with many outside activities
- A stronger, friendlier atmosphere
- Removal of speed bumps and road thinning
- Sustainable agriculture base
- A reduction in the number of politicians

- New headquarter facility for fire in the south end with a state of the art training centre
- The 50 year master plan at the waste water plant
- Water supply master plan
- Better design for new neighbourhoods – no garages in front of houses and the ability to walk to a store
- Guelph as a hub of commerce

## **E. Opportunities for strengthening the Strategic Plan**

- Ensure that there is organization–wide awareness of the strategic plan; what the goals are and how they will be achieved
- Include an implementation plan with the strategic plan; perhaps a companion document
- Clearly identify the priorities and then communicate them
- Bring people from the focus groups to validate the draft plan with Senior Management Team
- Keep staff involved – how will we measure? Goals are just ‘lip service’ - have to have a goal and a date and commit with set timelines
- Consider providing staff with a manual on how to implement the strategic plan – initiate it immediately
- The implementation plan is missing in the 2005 document
- Ensure that future report cards are communicated and distributed widely – consider using pay stubs to get the word out
- Ensure that the final plan is a community strategic plan – a partnership
- Make sure that the end result recognizes that decisions are made because they are the right decisions
- Create a completely fresh plan
- Reduce the amount of content – keep it straightforward and simple, easy to understand with an executive summary
- Have the cover page say strategic plan – that is not on the current version
- Create a buzz in the community with people calling to find out more about how strategies will be implemented and how it affects them – create a call to action for the community
- Include a section on what the City will do and what the community can do, how they can get involved – this will help to build a sense of community
- Limit the number of initiatives and directives for theme area.
- Demonstrate the benefits to the community, explain what their role is and how they can make some of this happen – what are their potential actions and responsibilities
- Ensure that it is not too high level
- Council must follow the plan
- Create specific outcomes
- Send it out to all residents and staff

- Include metrics that can be measured against
- Ensure that it is realistic and not ‘too far out there’
- Communicate clearly what is different from the last plan
- Provide staff with an opportunity to outline the initiatives/actions
- Clarify actions with staff – take baby steps to create a sense of accomplishment
- Include departmental service standards
- Contact information should be up to date – go to a generic title or website; generic point people
- Create regular report cards for staff and the public
- Ensure that the plan is being used and referred to regularly in decision making

#### **F. Other**

- Strengthen our collective accountability; play less of a blame game; have more encouragement and collaboration
- Focus on innovation and people – tradition based not tradition bound – a city is about people - enable them through better transit, encourage less use of water, focus on ways that make it easy and viable for citizens to accomplish those goals; be on the cutting edge of certain things that we are good at – (e.g. collaboration, public engagement, waste management)
- Guelph needs to identify its niche
- Become more self sufficient and sustaining to keep people in the City of Guelph
- As part of an accreditation process a new strategic plan is being developed for the fire station

#### **G. Queries raised**

- Time frame and budget for the strategic plan
- Role of previous public engagement exercises and 2005 strategic plan
- Opportunities for further staff involvement

#### **H. Closing Remarks**

Brenda and Glenn acknowledged contributions of the participants and thanked them for their attendance.



## 1.3 Public Meeting Results

### 1.3.1 Method

Three public meetings were held in specific Ward areas to ascertain additional public input to the community strategic plan process.

### 1.3.2 Schedule

<b>Meeting 1:</b> (Wards 3 & 4)	April 2: 5:30-7:00, 7:30 – 9:00 West End Recreation centre in the Impressive Promotion Room 21 Imperial Road 3 participants
<b>Meeting 2:</b> (Wards 5 & 6)	April 4: 6:00-7:30, 8:30-10:00 St. Paul's Catholic School in West Minster Woods 182 Clairfields Drive 10 participants
<b>Meeting 3:</b> (Wards 1 & 2)	April 5: 5:30-7:00, 7:30 – 9:00 Victoria Road Recreation Centre, Conference Room 151 Victoria Road North 7 participants
Total participants = 20	

### 1.3.3 Session Management

- Planning and supervision: Brenda Boisvert, Manager, Strategic Plan and Corporate Initiatives
- Facilitator: Glenn Pothier, Consultant, Strategic Plan
- Support: Muhammad Amin, Volunteer, Strategic Plan
- Glenn provided opening remarks and an introduction to the meetings
- Brenda provided an overview of the strategic planning process with a power point presentation covering the following areas:
  - a) History of strategic planning efforts at the City
  - b) Community consultation and involvement in the process
  - c) Strategic plan framework development
  - d) Plans for validation of the draft framework
  - e) Project timelines and next steps

### 1.3.4 Materials

A workbook was provided for written comments. Questions included in the book served as a guide for the discussion and included the following:

1. What makes Guelph a desirable place to live, work or play – what makes the community special or different from other Towns and Cities?
2. What are some others strengths of Guelph?
3. What are Guelph's weaknesses?
4. What things that are currently happening need to stop?
5. What needs to start happening?
6. How would you change or improve things that are already underway?
7. If you were a City of Guelph Councilor, what would be the three key issues that you would focus on to make Guelph a better place?
8. Any other comments?

### 1.3.5 Summary of Results

#### A. Positive attributes and strengths to build upon

- Geographically well situated and easily accessible from other nearby cities
- Affordable housing is present
- Many heritage sites, its downtown and cultural ethics have been retained
- A place of multicultural people with a strong sense of community
- There is a significant amount of green space and a two river system, mature trees, good water, good air quality and agricultural land
- The University provides many community opportunities for partnerships and development
- The City has a positive reputation for safety, low crime rates, peacefulness and cleanliness
- Many amenities are within walking distance in Guelph
- There is low traffic, good waste management and good urban services.
- The size of Guelph's population is manageable and it is a comfortable place to live
- Capacity to support many cultural events
- A number of volunteer groups are organized for good causes
- Good public engagement efforts

## B. Opportunities for improvement

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
Traffic and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase inter-city transport services</li> <li>▪ Improve the public transit system - people are spending a significant amount of time on long waits for the bus and need to change buses several times to reach a single destination</li> <li>▪ Increase the current number of bus shelters</li> <li>▪ Investigate alternative fuel sources for buses</li> <li>▪ Consider an alternate hub for the buses than St. George's square</li> <li>▪ Increase holiday bus service</li> <li>▪ Improve the cleanliness of buses with additional funding</li> <li>▪ Consider newer and quieter buses throughout the City</li> <li>▪ Expand east/west bus routes</li> <li>▪ Create traffic circles around the Hanlon</li> <li>▪ Develop an integrated plan for pedestrian travel to enhance safety</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that green space development keeps pace with commercial and residential development</li> <li>▪ Manage Guelph's water supply so that it is not taken completely by private companies</li> <li>▪ Have new construction projects protect original trees – create a policy or by-law to ensure that trees at risk are protected</li> <li>▪ Formalize an inventory of heritage trees</li> <li>▪ (One resident has created an inventory of over 1200 heritage trees)</li> <li>▪ Create a department of the environment and a forestry department – have qualified foresters on staff</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement an urban forest plan that protects the forest canopy – increase caretaking of the existing canopy</li> <li>▪ Increase the urban forest by 20% native species to help ameliorate climate change effects</li> <li>▪ Strengthen environmental planning - give it the weight it needs to be effective and to make an impact</li> <li>▪ Investigate opportunities for complete uninterrupted green space</li> <li>▪ Create a parks master plan</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete a trail system</li> <li>▪ Replant native trees</li> <li>▪ Ensure environmentally friendly street lighting</li> <li>▪ Allow for recharge of the aquifer when it rains and reduce storm water run off</li> <li>▪ Plant large trees on every south side to reduce the energy load in the summer months</li> <li>▪ Intersperse parking lot surfaces with a green canopy to reduce the heat island effect that is created</li> <li>▪ Plant thousands of more trees</li> <li>▪ Turn Guelph towards an environmentally sustainable future – a model for other cities</li> </ul>
Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiate a plan to improve the downtown</li> <li>▪ Ensure the downtown is safe after 9:00 p.m</li> <li>▪ Decrease the number of bars in the downtown area</li> <li>▪ Ensure upper floors of buildings in the downtown are not fire hazards – several wooden constructions exist</li> <li>▪ Install surveillance cameras in the downtown area to increase safety</li> <li>▪ Create more parking in the downtown. Look at the City of Charleston as a best practice city for parking management</li> <li>▪ Take measures to ensure that the downtown is a commercial, residential and cultural centre</li> <li>▪ Ensure an improved library in the downtown area</li> <li>▪ Keep the downtown area and square clean</li> <li>▪ Close off the downtown area to automobile traffic altogether – create cobblestone streets with restaurants and high-end residential condos</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance support for locally based agricultural products</li> <li>▪ Increase support for local farming operations</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the quality of urban planning – ensure a focus on ecological sustainability</li> <li>▪ Strengthen enforcement of current by-laws</li> <li>▪ Investigate the possibility of encouraging desired behaviours through positive reinforcement and campaigns, not just new by-laws</li> <li>▪ Investigate zoning violations – some residential areas are becoming mixed use – consider a by-law regarding what types of businesses are allowed in residential areas</li> <li>▪ Encourage the cross cultural integration in planning activities</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the current level of communication regarding state of emergency preparedness and planning efforts</li> <li>▪ Increase and strengthen regulations for better development</li> <li>▪ Better integrate commercial development</li> <li>▪ Create multiple community focus points – clusters of community centres</li> <li>▪ Increase action from the numerous planning studies that have been conducted over the years</li> <li>▪ Create marquis locations for the City</li> <li>▪ Prepare for what climate change will bring – develop a reserve fund to address unforeseen needs that may arise</li> <li>▪ Ensure the continuation of collaborative planning with residents and stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Establish common design standards for developers to adhere to</li> <li>▪ Require new development to be environmentally friendly e.g. at least 50% of new houses to have south facing roofs</li> <li>▪ Integrate commercial development – do not have huge stand alone big box stores</li> <li>▪ Create walkable and workable communities</li> </ul>
Urban Aesthetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen planning efforts to avoid homogeneous housing projects – create more livable communities where cars are parked at the rear of the dwelling</li> <li>▪ Encourage the owners of plazas to ‘green’ them with rows of trees and flowers</li> <li>▪ Remove LED signs and advertising from bus shelters – keep the city clean</li> <li>▪ Strengthen the focus on aesthetics of the City – remove large signs, traffic calming devices and obstructions (e.g. traffic blockades at Arthur and Queen streets)</li> <li>▪ Retain the City’s beauty and augment it with a variety of innovative initiatives</li> <li>▪ Consider interlocking blocks instead of pavement</li> </ul>
Social Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase support of non-profit groups</li> <li>▪ Create a recreation centre in the south end of the City</li> <li>▪ Consider the needs of an increasingly multicultural community</li> <li>▪ Address growing chasms between socio-economic</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<p>groups and locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement initiatives for greater social cohesion</li> <li>▪ Reduce the amount of chlorine the drinking water</li> <li>▪ Fill the need to generate pride in the community through various programs and communications – create a volunteer or community spirit awards program</li> <li>▪ Address the lengthy social housing waiting list -many low-income job opportunities have been created in the past years and social housing needs are not keeping pace</li> <li>▪ Determine ways to increase the level of protection at community shelters</li> <li>▪ Enlarge the City’s infrastructure by creating a new world-class library – a social, intellectual and cultural hub that includes a café (e.g. Portugal model)</li> <li>▪ Devote more funds to youth activities</li> <li>▪ Encourage and support organic farming and products</li> </ul>
Management and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the implementation of ideas – turn public input into practice</li> <li>▪ Strengthen by-law enforcement for a potential source of additional revenue (e.g. dogs running free in leash free parks)</li> <li>▪ Ensure results and communication of successes</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the provision of services is keeping pace with the rate of growth – develop an urban plan for infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Communicate the hidden costs of growth</li> <li>▪ Create means and initiatives to keep the community engaged (e.g. a community participation program around garbage)</li> <li>▪ Tap into the reservoirs of untapped capacity for new ideas that exist</li> <li>▪ Create more partnerships with the community and neighbourhood groups to look after our trees, parks and trails (e.g. Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence) – let citizens take responsibility for what happens within the City too</li> <li>▪ Create opportunities for urban stewardship – apply private wealth to the public good. Provide opportunities for investment in the City through opportunities to donate and receive tax breaks in return (e.g. tax incentives for planting trees)</li> </ul>

Opportunity Area	Possible Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve partnerships with the University to tap into the expertise that exists there</li> <li>▪ Seek out and implement examples and best practices from around the world</li> </ul>
Growth Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create an urban development reserve fund – get more out of developers</li> </ul>
Tourism and the Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create eco-tourism opportunities</li> <li>▪ Promote our trail system</li> <li>▪ Create more cultural events in the downtown area</li> <li>▪ More aggressive economic development</li> <li>▪ Entice more employers</li> <li>▪ Diversify the economic base</li> </ul>

### C. Priorities to be addressed

- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Downtown
- Environment
- Sustainable local food production
- Enhanced management and planning
- By-law enforcement
- Well planned growth
- Economic development

### D. Other

- Possible visions – to be future focused; a city that lives with its own ecological footprint; a pleasant, healthy, durable community that pays attention to green spaces, recreation facilities, cultural needs and housing; an experimental town for environmental initiatives; care about what impact we can make in the future – do those things that will have people 20 years from now saying we did the right things; ensure that we build on initiatives that have already taken place (e.g. Smart Guelph); create a good community with proper governance, money, time and vision.
- Consider ongoing public consultation and engagement. Set aside a particular month or have regular monthly opportunities for engagement on a variety of issues.
- Move the Farmer’s Market into Old Quebec street and weather permitting – St. George’s square.
- Ensure a look 20-50 years into the future

## **E. Queries raised**

- Time frame and budget for the strategic plan
- Objective of the strategic plan and planned monitoring mechanisms
- Role of previous public engagement exercises and 2005 strategic plan
- Community involvement in the strategic plan process
- Relationship of the strategic plan to other ongoing public consultation and planning initiatives

## **F. Closing Remarks**

Brenda and Glenn acknowledged contributions of the participants and thanked them for their attendance.



## 1.4 General Public Survey

### 1.4.1. Method

A survey consisting of 6 questions for the general public was posted on the external website. Staff and volunteers at the Guelph and District Multicultural Centre aided in the translation of the document into 9 languages – Urdu, Punjabi, French, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali and Farsi. Volunteers also assisted with translating the submitted surveys into English.

### 1.4.2 Schedule

The survey was posted on the City's website on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to coincide with the launch of the 2007 strategic plan initiative. Hard copies were produced with postage paid envelopes for distribution.

### 1.4.3 Survey Procedure

**Public Survey** – an open-ended questionnaire was posted on the City's website to which respondents provided their opinions and aspirations for the future of the City. Several community volunteers and organizations assisted with the translation and distribution of the surveys to multicultural groups and events. The same survey questions were also administered to the University through the Central Student Association and were handed out at a variety of locations during Community Places and Spaces meetings that took place at the West End and Victoria Road Recreation centres, the Westminster Library and the Evergreen Centre.

Several surveys were also distributed at meetings, at the Farmers Market, directly to the vendors in the market, to St. Joseph's Health Care Centre and businesses in the downtown area.

**Telephone Interviews** – Mayor Farbridge, Councillors and the Senior Management Team called several randomly selected residents. In all, 42 residents were successfully contacted. As well, a list of 79 community stakeholders was compiled from Community Design and Development Services lists and Guelph/Wellington Community Information Database to ensure participation from the variety of sectors in the community - business, culture, recreation, environment, health and social services and neighbourhoods. Seventeen were successfully contacted during the month of March.

#### 1.4.4 Results: Summary Data Tables

**Table One**  
**Things liked most about Guelph**

Response	Total Sample (n=402) %
Small town feel/community size	30
Parks/Green spaces	26
Downtown	21
Clean/Environmentally-friendly	17
University of Guelph/Post-Sec. presence	17
Arts/Culture/Entertainment	16
Friendly/caring community	15
Heritage and history	12
Trails	10
Shopping/Stores/Market	10
Location/Proximity to Toronto and other	10
Safe/Peaceful	10
Sense of community/Community spirit	8
Walkable	8
Transportation	8
Active/Engaged community	8
Multiculturalism/Diversity	6
Architecture/Building design	6
Restaurants/Food	5
Family-oriented/Good place to raise kids	5
River(s)/Water courses	5
Recreational facilities/Community Centres	5
Neighbourhoods other than downtown	4
Specific places (various)	4
City governance — elected officials	3
Amenities/services/programs	3
Good overall atmosphere	3
Good place re: employment/for business	2
Waste management (wet/dry recycling)	2
City governance — staff	2
Quiet/Calm lifestyle	2
Education/schools	1
Easy to get around	*
Other	2
No Response	*

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.

\* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

**Table Two**  
**Things liked least about Guelph**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Total Sample (n=400) %</b>
Urban sprawl/mismanaged growth	38
Amount/type of shopping facilities	20
Public transit deficiencies	20
Road safety/traffic flow/light coordination	15
Crime/Unsafe	15
Waste management practices	14
Parking	12
Downtown	10
Traffic/congestion	10
Lack of River accessibility/Env. focus	9
Declining urban aesthetics	9
Lack of entertainment	7
Poverty/homelessness	6
Lack of community pride	5
Insufficient support for arts/culture	5
Nothing/No major issues	4
Water shortages	4
Lack of employment opportunities	4
High taxes	4
Lack of health care/ambulance/paramedics	3
Too much construction	3
Population is growing too fast	2
Lack of affordable housing	2
Town is too small/Small town feel	2
Specific streets/neighbourhoods	2
Lack of restaurants	2
Lack of diversity/multiculturalism	1
Lack of trains/public transit to Toronto/other	1
Lack of support for low income families	1
Lack of services for people with disabilities	1
City is too liberal	*
Other	*
No response	*

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.

\* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

**Table Three  
Top three issues facing Guelph today**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Total Sample (n=400) %</b>
Growth management/urban sprawl	43
Waste management/Wet-dry/Landfill issues	34
Water supply	26
Downtown revitalization	14
Lack of commercial outlets/stores	12
Public transit (intra- and inter-City)	12
Pollution	12
Lack of employment opportunities	11
Public safety	10
Transportation/roads	10
Funding/support for arts and culture	9
Affordable housing	8
Healthcare	7
Population growth/new housing	7
Traffic	7
High taxes	6
Politics/budget	5
University-related issues	5
Maintaining community character/identity	5
Parking	4
Cost of living	3
Bars/related noise/litter/other problems	3
Big box stores	3
Parks	2
Multicultural issues	1
Divided community	*
No issues	*
Other	2
No response	4

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.

\* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

**Table Four**  
**Top three things to do to make Guelph a better place**

<b>Response</b>	Total Sample (n=398) %
More/better recreational opportunities	26
More retail/better commercial establishments	23
Control/manage growth and reduce sprawl	22
Improve public transit	21
More walking/biking paths and trails	20
Improve waste mgmt./solve garbage issue	19
Greater environmental/sustainability focus	18
Improve/revitalize downtown	14
Greater employment opportunities	9
Improve public safety/security	9
Better roads/reduce congestion	9
Improve health services	8
Improve housing opportunities	7
Free parking downtown	6
Lower taxes	5
Increase community pride	5
Address water supply issues	4
Reduce/control bars	4
Address education issues	2
Develop the City core	2
Ban pesticide use	1
Nothing	1
Other	2
No response	6

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.  
 \* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

**Table Five  
Aspirations for Guelph 20 years from now**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Total Sample (n=396) %</b>
Environmental focus/friendly	31
More vibrant urban core/downtown	25
Well managed/controlled growth	23
Excellent public transit	23
More trees/greenspace	22
Same as now	17
Happier/Healthier residents and community	16
Vibrant arts/culture scene	13
More walkable	10
Better shopping/retail	10
Bigger/similar to larger cities	9
Safer/more secure	9
University remains important	8
More employment opportunities	6
People-focused	5
Increased beautification	5
Greater tourism	2
More health services	2
More livable	1
Other	5
No response	7

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.

\* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

**Table Six  
General Comments**

<b>Response</b>	Total Sample (n=370) %
Like Guelph/Hope everything goes well	14
Hope Guelph doesn't grow too large	13
Need to control growth/better planning	12
Need to focus on environment/sustainability	11
City Council needs to consult/listen to public	7
Need to focus on public transit	5
Need to focus on downtown	4
Need to be green	3
Need to focus on Univ. of Guelph issues	3
Need better/more employment opportunities	2
Like the Mayor	2
Concern about water supply	2
Need fiscal responsibility/lower taxes	2
Need to address housing	2
Dislike big box stores	1
Other	11
No Response	37

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 given the inclusion of multiple responses and/or rounding.

\* Denotes a percentage of less than 0.5

## **1.5 Challenge to the Youth of Guelph**

During Phase 2, young people 19 and under were encouraged to write, draw or build what they would like the City to be in the future. The deadline date was extended to April 20<sup>th</sup> to provide more time for participants. Statistics on final submission numbers were not available at the time of the creation of this report. All primary and secondary schools in Guelph were contacted via an email message to promote the challenge and advertisements were included in the Guelph Mercury and Museum, Libraries, and Guelph Arts Council.

## **1.6 Additional Submissions**

### **1. Proposal for the Use of Traffic Circles on the Hanlon Expressway**

An argument was put forward for the inclusion of traffic circles on the Hanlon Expressway as a cost effective and environmentally friendly means of facilitating traffic flow.

### **2. Vision for the City of Guelph**

Ideas were presented regarding development of the downtown around a family and children theme based on the statue in St. George's Square.

- build exclusive low-rise condos throughout the downtown
- build underground parking
- make the downtown an open walking market
- move cultural attractions downtown
- install three new sculptures that speak to family and children
- put in a major tourist attraction – national gallery focused on children
- create eating and student districts
- work to connect the north and south

### **3. Vision for City Hall and the Downtown**

A suggestion was put forward to just add small trees in front of the new City Hall and no benches. For the downtown area ideas included having more free parking, converting Baker Street parking lot into a parking garage with the Farmers Market on the ground floor and adding onto the main library instead of creating a new building.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

The Strategic Listening phase of the community strategic plan process was successful in terms of being able to reach a wide sample of residents and stakeholders in the community and better understand their aspirations for the future of Guelph. The information is indicative and directional in nature only and not statistically reliable. All



information will be put forward to Council and the Senior Management Team for consideration in advance of the development of a draft strategic plan framework.

## **1.8 Appendices**

The following appendices are available upon request:

### 1. General Public Survey Questionnaire

- Community Strategic Plan – internal
- Community Strategic Plan – external

### 2. Staff Focus Groups

- Focus Group Questions

### 3. Public Meetings

- Public Meeting Agenda
- Public Meeting Discussion Guide
- Public Meeting Workbook

### 4. Telephone Interviews

- List of community stakeholder organizations contacted
- Community Stakeholder Telephone Interview Response Sheet

### 5. Additional Inputs

- Smart Guelph Findings
- Long Term Growth Management Launch Findings