

# GUELPH

Strategic Plan  
*07*  
and beyond

the city that makes a  
*difference*

# the city that makes a difference



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from the

# Mayor

I am delighted to present  
our Strategic Plan.



Throughout the first half of 2007 we asked residents for their vision for Guelph over the next 20 years. Hundreds of you responded. Thank you for contributing your thoughtful, creative, and inspiring ideas to this process.

Our vision for Guelph is a remarkable one: **“to be the city that makes a difference.”** The Plan contains goals and related strategic objectives that provide a road map for how we can strive to achieve the vision over the long term.

The Plan is meant to inspire all of us to consider how we can make a difference, in our neighbourhoods and in the world. While the Plan’s ambitious goals won’t be reached overnight, progress will be made year by year and the City will report to residents regularly on how we are doing.

For Council and City staff, the Strategic Plan will be an important tool for setting priorities, making decisions, and managing operations for years to come.

My hope is that the impact of the Plan will extend well beyond the walls of City Hall, into every home and business in Guelph. In keeping with the Plan’s collaborative spirit, everyone in the community will have a role to play in achieving it.

I am often impressed by the tremendous passion Guelphites have for their city. That passion was in evidence throughout the strategic planning process, and it will certainly serve us well as, together, we strive to make Guelph **“the city that makes a difference.”**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Farbridge". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Karen Farbridge  
Mayor

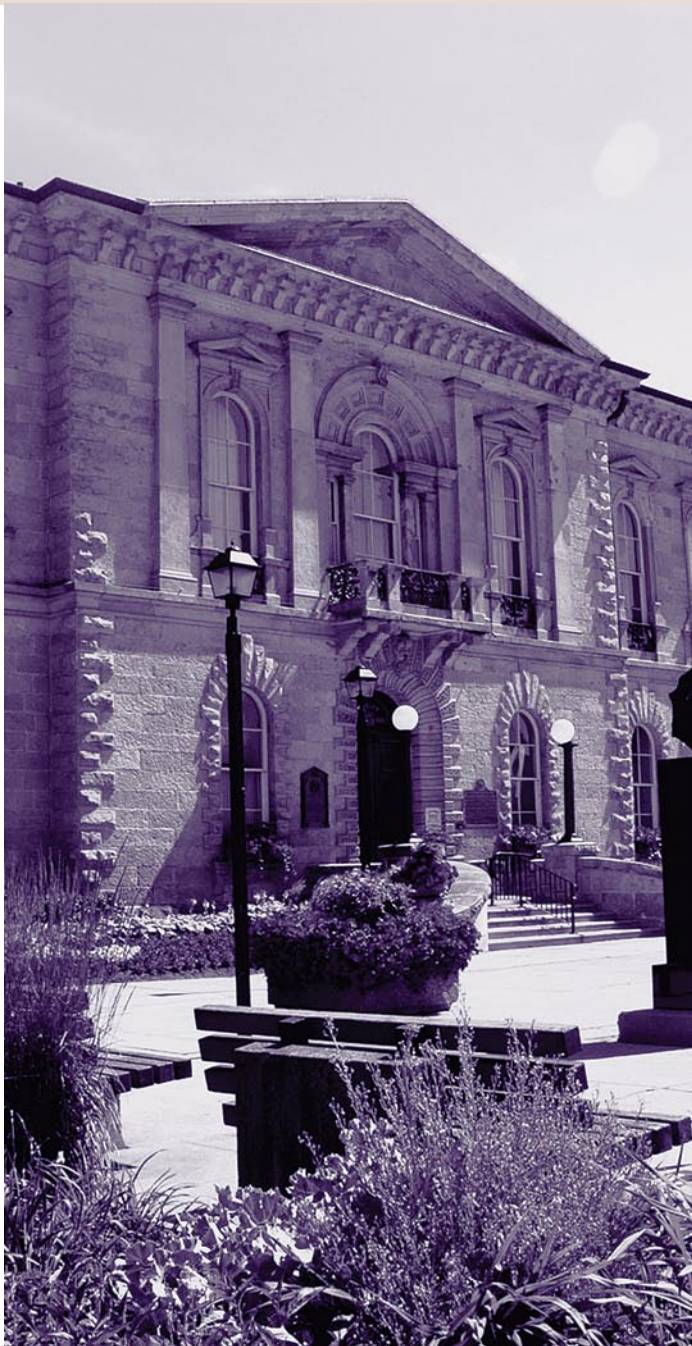


Special

## thanks

On behalf of the City of Guelph, the Mayor and members of Council would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the development of the 2007 Strategic Plan. Their hard work, dedication and commitment to the strategic planning process was instrumental in the creation of this Plan.





# Introduction

The City of Guelph's long term, community driven Strategic Plan responds to both current and emerging trends facing this municipality and to the aspirations and realities of hundreds of community members. Included in this document is an overview of the forces of change at play, the collaborative and inclusive process that was undertaken, how the Plan will be achieved, the vision, mission, goals and strategic objectives.

Founded on core principles of open communication and collaboration, the City's Strategic Plan is also dependent on those same elements for the successful realization of the goals contained within. There is a role for everyone to play in its ultimate success – Council, staff and members of the community. Every positive effort undertaken in these collective directions will help to better meet current needs and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.



Guelph:

## Shaping our future

The City of Guelph was founded by John Galt on April 23, 1827 and since that day it has flourished into a model single-tier municipality with a current population of 120,000. There is great pride in the community, evident in its many heritage landmarks, world renowned festivals, well maintained greenspaces, vibrant neighbourhoods and the high level of public participation and collaboration in public decision making.

Trends affecting governance structures, services, programs and the methods by which they are delivered have and will continue to influence cities and towns. Guelph, too, is subject to these 'forces of change' which include:



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- ***Growth:*** Guelph has experienced steady growth in the past and this is expected to continue in the future. The city has doubled in population over the past 40 years, and now has a population of approximately 120,000 people. Guelph constitutes one part of the overall Greater Golden Horseshoe area which is expected to grow by four million people by the year 2031.
- ***Environment:*** Global climate change is considered by many as the primary threat facing the modern world today. In many communities there is increasing awareness of the crucial role that local governments can play in helping to ensure the sustainable management of resources and effective stewardship of the natural environment.
- ***Technology:*** Advances in Internet infrastructure, communications and multimedia are increasingly facilitating globalization, influencing workplaces and allowing for greater sharing of information. As part of the global community, municipalities, including Guelph, are well positioned to capitalize on international best practices and innovations.
- ***Demographics:*** Primary factors that will continue to influence Canada's demographic profile include an aging population and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity. For local governments, these factors will have a substantial impact on what services are provided and the methods of delivery.
- ***Politics:*** The place of local governments in the Canadian intergovernmental system is being redefined and the important role that cities play in the competitive global economy is being recognized. New roles and partnerships are being forged and citizen expectations for collaborative public decision-making processes will continue to develop.
- ***Economics:*** Increased funding responsibilities coupled with lower provincial grants will continue to result in a challenging fiscal environment in which municipalities operate. An ongoing need exists to fund services in an accountable and fair manner.

In direct response to these trends, challenges and opportunities, the City of Guelph has created a new community-driven Strategic Plan. This plan positions the City well to:

- 1 ensure the ongoing effective and efficient delivery of a full range of relevant programs and services; and
- 2 continue on a successful path towards securing a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

The Strategic Plan will be used as an integral management tool for ongoing priority setting and decision making. It will enhance organizational effectiveness and continue to demonstrate accountability to the community.

## Strategic Plan process:

### *Collaborative and inclusive*

In 1993, the City of Guelph produced its first Strategic Plan entitled, *"The Royal City – Looking Ahead."* Since that time, the Strategic Plan has undergone a number of revisions under the guidance of successive Councils. The process for creating the most recent Strategic Plan incorporated the Smart Guelph principles developed in 2003 for public engagement. It allowed the city to successfully connect with hundreds of staff and community members to create a new vision, mission, goals and strategic objectives.

Designed to be cost effective, inclusive and achievable, the 2007 process took place over an eight month period. Preparation of the plan was undertaken using a collaborative and inclusive consultation approach that blended the perspectives and aspirations of members of Council, staff and the community. Survey questions were translated into many languages. Youth in the city were engaged through an artistic challenge to demonstrate their thoughts for the future. Consultation and citizen engagement took place throughout the entire process – from the formative stages of the Plan's preparation to its approval. Full engagement with staff and the community will continue as progress related to the goals and strategic objectives is openly discussed, planned and achieved.

*Phase 1:*  
Project  
initiation

*Phase 2:*  
Strategic  
listening

*Phase 3:*  
Developing  
the  
framework

*Phase 4:*  
Validating  
the  
framework

*Phase 5:*  
Strategic  
Plan  
refinement,  
endorsement  
and  
communication

### *Public consultation*

February – June

#### **Phase 1: Project initiation**

In January, Council approved the process for the 2007 Strategic Plan. In addition, a communications plan was created and the stage was set for an effective process to gather information from across the community on the future of Guelph.

#### **Phase 2: Strategic listening**

Public consultation took place with a wide array of individuals and groups through focus groups, telephone interviews, a youth challenge and surveys to get a sound understanding of what the City should be like in the future. All the information collected was provided to Council and the Senior Management Team for consideration prior to the development of a draft Strategic Plan framework.

#### **Phase 3: Developing the framework**

A draft Strategic Plan document was created by members of Council, the Senior Management Team and several community members for review by all interested parties. This document reflected the feedback collected in Phase 2. Once drafted, the plan was then subject to further staff review and reflection by the community.

#### **Phase 4: Validating the framework**

The draft framework was made available to the general public for review and discussion to gauge the extent to which it reflected the expectations and aspirations of the larger community. Feedback gathered through focus groups, telephone interviews and surveys served as input for refinements to the Strategic Plan.

#### **Phase 5: Refinement, endorsement and communication**

Once the Strategic Plan was validated, it was refined and endorsed by Council in August. The Strategic Plan will serve as the guiding document under which all City initiatives are aligned.



## Achieving *our goals*

To effectively implement the Strategic Plan and achieve its goals, there are roles for everyone in the community to play. Actions undertaken by Council and staff to implement the plan and monitor progress will be critical. To this end, key priorities will be identified annually and departmental business plans will be linked directly to these priorities, the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan. Roles, responsibilities, performance measures, required resources and target dates for completion of specific projects that will work towards achieving the goals and executing the overall strategic direction will be clearly identified. Regular progress reports will be prepared for Council and the community to clearly demonstrate successes and achievements. To ensure the long term viability of the Plan it will be revisited and updated every four years to correspond with each municipal election.



### *Our vision*

To be the City that makes a difference....  
Acting locally and globally to improve  
the lives of residents, the broader  
community and the world.

### *Our mission*

To achieve excellence through leadership, innovation,  
partnerships and community engagement.





# Urban design and sustainable *growth*

## Goal 1

*An attractive, well-functioning  
and sustainable city*





## Strategic objectives:



1.1

A distinct community identity with leading edge, city-wide urban design policies

1.2

Municipal sustainability practices that become the benchmark against which other cities are measured

1.3

A Local Growth Management Strategy that effectively guides where and how future growth will take place

1.4

A sustainable transportation approach that looks comprehensively at all modes of travel to, from and within the community

1.5

The downtown as a place of community focus and destination of national interest

1.6

A balanced tax assessment ratio





Personal and community

# well-being

## Goal 2

*A healthy and safe community  
where life can be lived to the fullest*



## Strategic objectives:



2.1

A complete community with services and programs for children, youth and adults of all ages

2.2

Diverse housing options and health care services to meet the needs of current and future generations

2.3

The most physically and socially active residents in Canada

2.4

The lowest crime rate and best emergency services record of any comparable-sized Canadian city

2.5

Comprehensive life-long learning opportunities

2.6

A well-connected and accessible community that values diversity, multiculturalism, volunteerism and philanthropy







Economic

# opportunity

Goal 3

*A diverse and prosperous  
local economy*



## Strategic objectives:



3.1

Thriving and sustainable local employment opportunities

3.2

One of Ontario's top five and Canada's top ten places to invest

3.3

The highest ratio of any southern Ontario city of people who live and work in the same community

3.4

Fair tax policies and streamlined processes across all levels of government

3.5

A diverse and skilled local workforce

3.6

The city as a tourist destination of choice







# Arts, culture and *heritage*

## Goal 4

*A vibrant and valued arts,  
culture and heritage identity*





## Strategic objectives:



- 4.1 A designated cultural capital of Canada
- 4.2 Numerous opportunities for artistic appreciation, expression and development
- 4.3 Highest per capita use of city libraries, museums and cultural facilities among any comparable Canadian city
- 4.4 Intact and well managed heritage resources
- 4.5 Capitalize on our cultural and heritage assets to build economic prosperity, quality of life and community identity





## Government and community *involvement*

### Goal 5

*A community-focused, responsive  
and accountable government*



## Strategic objectives:



- 5.1 The highest municipal customer service satisfaction rating of any comparable-sized Canadian community
- 5.2 A consultative and collaborative approach to community decision making
- 5.3 Open, accountable and transparent conduct of municipal business
- 5.4 Partnerships to achieve strategic goals and objectives
- 5.5 A high credit rating and strong financial position
- 5.6 Organizational excellence in planning, management, human resources and people practices; recognized as a top employer in the community
- 5.7 The highest per capita municipal election voter turnout of any city in Ontario







Natural

# *environment*

Goal 6

*A leader in conservation and  
resource protection/enhancement*



## Strategic objectives:



6.1

Coordinated management of parks, the natural environment and the watershed

6.2

Less total greenhouse gas emissions for the City as a whole compared to the current global average

6.3

A safe and reliable local water supply

6.4

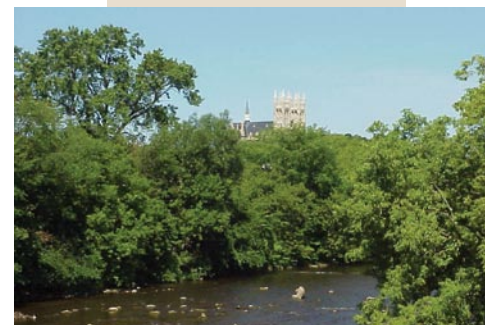
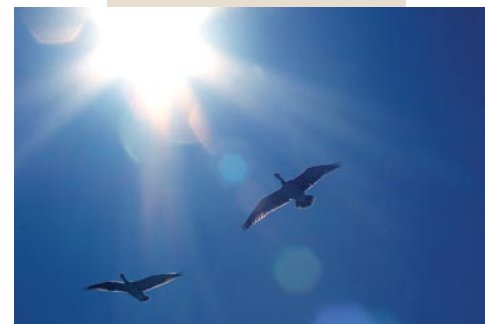
Less waste per capita than any comparable Canadian city

6.5

Less energy and water per capita use than any comparable Canadian city

6.6

A biodiverse City with the highest tree canopy percentage among comparable municipalities





#### **Further information**

If you have any comments about this document or would like to learn more about the strategic planning process and your role in helping to realize the goals, please contact Corporate Administration at **519-822-1260**.

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