

CAMBRIDGE CONNECTED OUR VOICE OUR VISION

Strategic Planning Framework (Final Draft)

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Submitted to:



Submitted by:



DRAFT

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1 Introduction

Project Background and Purpose

The City of Cambridge received approval from Council on February 17, 2015 to develop a strategic plan for the City entitled “**Cambridge Connected: Our Voice, Our Vision**”. The strategic plan will provide a new framework that will help set the stage for decision-making, priority setting and ongoing performance management. This strategic plan will reflect the collective vision of the whole community and connect this vision with the short, medium and longer-term actions of council and city staff over the next several years.

Our voice, Our vision will:

- Be developed by listening to the voice of the people who live, work and play in Cambridge;
- Connect the community's vision and goals with the corporate mission, values and actions of the city; and
- Guide decision-making, help direct tax dollars to community priorities, and allow the community to measure progress.



This report provides an overview of the final draft of the strategic planning framework developed through three primary phases.

“Connect” Phase 1 - Setting the stage and asking: “Where are we now?”

“Collaborate” Phase 2 - Identifying potential and asking: “Where do we want to go as a community?”

“Create” Phase 3 - Making choices and asking: “How are we going to move forward together?”

It is the result of the review and consideration of the comments received from all stakeholders to date.

In October 2015, a first draft of the proposed strategic planning framework was released for stakeholder

review and comment. This (final) draft includes the proposed revisions to the framework by the staff project team, consultant team, Senior Management Team and the Steering Committee based on the comments received as part of the Phase 3 consultation opportunities.

2 Strategic Planning Framework

Vision

A clear vision for the future is a key foundational element of any strategic plan. It provides “a north star” that helps guide decision making – ensuring that all stakeholders are heading in the same direction. However, it should be noted that the vision statement is not intended to act as a “tag line” or a marketing slogan.

Based on the review of the comments received in Phase 3, the proposed vision statement is as follows:

Cambridge:

A place for people to prosper – **alive** with opportunity.

While this statement is a slight departure from the first option developed, it addresses public comments related to a “forward looking” and inspirational statement. Used in conjunction with the vision outlined by the City’s Official Plan, the hope is to balance the future aspirations of the community with the features that people value in the present (heritage, nature, community).

Mission and Values

The city’s mission is an important statement that describes the purpose of the organization – what we do and how we do it. In 2014 staff collaboratively developed the following values, to be applied in the city’s strategic planning framework:

- Integrity
- Inclusiveness
- Respect
- Service

In developing the mission statement, there was general agreement that working collaboratively with all our partners (internal and external) was a critical element. The reference to the city’s core values was also noted as a key feature that needed to be highlighted. Ultimately, the role of staff and council at the City of Cambridge is to provide high quality service the community.

Comments related to the mission during the Phase 3 consultation period, suggested that it was important for the mission to be clear, concise and that the organization live up to those expectations. The proposed mission statement for the City is as follows:

- Working together.**
- Committed to our values.**
- Serving our community.**



Developing the Framework

Throughout the various phases of community discussion and consultation, seven themes were identified as key areas of priority and focus. They are:

- Arts, Culture, Heritage and Architecture;
- Community Wellbeing;
- Economic Development and Tourism;
- Environment and Rivers;
- Governance and Leadership;
- Parks and Recreation; and
- Transportation and Infrastructure.

Following the completion of Phase 2, potential goals and objectives within the seven theme areas were discussed at a staff workshop. A draft framework was developed and further augmented by discussions with the Project Team, the Steering Committee and by reviewing the results of the public consultation and engagement process.

Cambridge Connected: Our Voice, Our Vision (final draft framework)

Following the full review of the preliminary strategic planning framework, staff identified three “overarching themes” that were consistent with previous discussions by all the stakeholder groups consulted. As a result, the proposed framework is organized to reflect the following themes:

- People
- Place
- Prosperity

As part of the Phase 3 consultation, the public, staff and council reviewed the first draft of the framework and provided comment. Following meetings by the Project Team, Consultant Team and Steering Committee, a revised set of goals and objectives are now proposed for consideration.

People: To actively engage, inform and create opportunities for people to participate in community building – making Cambridge a better place to live, work, play and learn for all.

Community Wellbeing	
<p>Goal: Promote a caring community where people can make strong connections with others and lead safe, healthy and productive lives.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to create a safe, inclusive and accessible city. • Support and facilitate community access to services related to health, wellness and personal development. • Deliver accessible, inclusive and age-friendly services, programs, and facilities. • Promote, facilitate and participate in the development of affordable, welcoming and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Governance and Leadership	
<p>Goal: Provide open, transparent, accountable and innovative leadership in local governance and service delivery.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a wide range of ways that people can become involved in city decision making. • Communicate often and make sure messages are clear, timely and delivered in a variety of ways. • Encourage a culture of innovation and engagement that allows all staff to contribute to the ongoing renewal of city services and programs. • Work collaboratively with other government agencies and partners to achieve common goals and ensure representation of community interests. • Focus on the responsible management of financial resources, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Place: To take care of, celebrate and share the great features in Cambridge that we love and mean the most to us.

Arts, Culture, Heritage and Architecture	
<p>Goal: Promote a creative environment that encourages arts, culture, heritage and values our unique architectural assets.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance arts and culture initiatives through strong partnerships, collaboration and promotion. • Conserve and make positive contributions to our heritage districts and buildings throughout the community. • Facilitate, support and provide a diverse range of events and festivals that bring all people together from across the city, region and beyond.
Environment and Rivers	
<p>Goal: Be good stewards of the rivers, waterways and natural environment that this community enjoys.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that sustainability principles are a part of city decision making processes. • Encourage innovative approaches to address environmental challenges. • Work with other partners to educate the public and help make changes to improve and protect our natural heritage features. • Manage city resources in a responsible and sustainable manner, considering future needs for resiliency and community adaptation.
Parks and Recreation	
<p>Goal: Facilitate and deliver a wide range of accessible and diverse community recreation opportunities.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the community to provide the right mix of recreational opportunities that meet the needs of a changing and diverse population. • Increase community participation in the ongoing care of our parks, natural spaces and environmental areas. • Develop a strategic approach to programs and services that tie investments/ resources to community outcomes.

Prosperity: To support and encourage the growth of a highly competitive local economy where there is opportunity for everyone to contribute and succeed.

Economic Development and Tourism	
<p>Goal: Support and promote a strong, dynamic, and innovative local economy.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation and retention of high quality and diverse employment opportunities by becoming the destination of choice for business and entrepreneurship, including helping existing firms thrive and grow. • Promote vibrant and inviting downtown cores by encouraging partnerships and creating a wide range of unique, exciting destinations and activities. • Identify local economic strengths and leverage opportunities through collaboration with our partners.

Transportation and Infrastructure	
<p>Goal: Create and maintain a highly effective, sustainable and coordinated local infrastructure and transportation network.</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new ways to help people move within and beyond the city without using a car (walking, cycling and transit). • Work with the Region and other partners to better coordinate the planning, communication and delivery of infrastructure (including roads and other transportation assets) in Cambridge. • Provide innovative leadership in the management of city assets to help plan, fund and maintain city assets in a sustainable way. • Continue to improve the accessibility of all built infrastructure.

3 Draft Implementation Plan

Implementing the Plan

The Strategic Plan provides a framework to reach Cambridge’s vision, and will be a living document. It does not outline actions within the plan, but rather will be integrated into departmental business plans and work plans and used to identify new priorities.

It should be noted that the themes shaping the goals and objectives outlined in this plan were developed by allowing the community to identify issues important to them. While staff were able to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that emerged, the community was not asked to provide input based a pre-determined set of parameters or economic, social, environmental, cultural indicators. This approach was selected given the preference that members of the community bring their own experiences and perspectives into the discussion for this long-term vision and framework. Essentially, it was important to take a “blue sky” approach to figure out where the community wanted to go in the future rather than placing certain limitations on the feedback process.

An extensive background review was completed as part of this process that included analysis of the following:

- Environics Survey Results (Cambridge Results);
- All prior Strategic Plans and Master Plans;
- Community Trends Report (Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries);
- Cambridge Community Profile; and
- Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy (2014).

As a result, staff recognize that there are a variety of considerations that will have to be incorporated in the way this framework is applied to city decision making – particularly in terms of the specific actions items and city initiatives that are selected to move ahead. A key mechanism to ensure that priorities are evaluated within this broader context will be the subsequent work planning outlined below.

Work Planning with Departments

The actions identified as part of the development of the Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the annual departmental work programs or “Business Plans” which will be developed by Senior Management in collaboration with the Corporate Leadership Team and the City Manager.

These work plans will be presented to Council for their consideration and decision. In addition, the public will be able to review the work plans which will also form the basis for annual progress reports.

Every year, staff will be invited to help prioritize the refined list of potential actions. As a group, staff will review each of the actions to determine which actions are of the highest priority, and run each action through the following set of criteria:

Strategic Fit

- Does the initiative overlap with multiple goal/theme areas or actions?
- Does it convey the vision?
- Is it measurable (i.e., can you say “done/achieved/implemented”)?
- Is there interest and support of the proposed project by the community?
- Does it conform with or build on existing initiatives?

Urgency

- Is the action prescribed by legislation?
- Is the program already underway?
- What are the potential risks if an action is not undertaken?

Resources

- Are there partners for implementation? Who are they?
- Financial resources - Is funding available? Is it within the approved capital/operating budget?
- HR resources - What is the capacity of staff to complete the project?
- Is this project dependent on another project or is another project dependent on it (coordination/timing implications)?
- Has life cycle planning/cost/repairs been considered?
- Are there other resources required to complete the project? What are they?

Consideration of these questions will allow senior staff to develop a range of potential priority actions within the annual work programs. In the annual work programs, individual staff members will be assigned responsibility for overseeing the implementation of specific actions.

Aligning with other City Plans

This Strategic Plan’s vision, goals and objectives must be integrated into the City’s existing organizational structures and policy frameworks. To that end, other City plans should demonstrate alignment with the Strategic Plan to the greatest extent possible. To maintain momentum, all staff reports to Council will demonstrate alignment with the Strategic Plan and refer to specific goals and objectives achieved.

Create an Implementation Team

Overseen by the Office of the City Manager, an implementation team consisting of city staff and community partners will be established. This team will meet on a regular basis each year to reflect on the actions and opportunities completed, and to look at opportunities in the future work planning and prioritizing. It will also serve as a resource for the purposes of monitoring operations and providing input on key initiatives. Key responsibilities of the team will include:

- Continuously monitor the progress of the implementation of the plan and communicate with stakeholder groups as appropriate;
- Provide advice relating to the overall implementation of the plan; and
- Assist with the organization of workshops or presentations.

Further, the team may include community representation, which would be coordinated with the activities of the existing committees of council (see below).

Committees of Council Review

It is proposed that staff work with Council to review the existing Advisory Committee structure to ensure that the full value of these committees to the overall decision making framework is realized. One option that may be considered is the revision of the current Committee of Council structure. Currently, there are over 15 different advisory committees appointed by Council. Each of these individual committees has a separate mandate and tend to focus on very specific issues and projects. With the introduction of a new strategic plan, there may be an opportunity to reshape the current structure to ensure a stronger connection with the overarching themes of the plan – people, place and prosperity. By developing clear mandates related to the goals and objectives within each of these themes and ensuring representation from a variety of areas of expertise, perspectives and demographic areas, these committees could play a very active role in both the implementation of the plan and the annual reporting to the community.

Plan Manager

It is recommended that the City continues to have a Plan Manager (Currently the Director of Corporate Strategy in the Office of the City Manager), with the overall responsibility to oversee implementation and act as the one-window point of contact. The following tasks/roles will be part of this role:

- Serving as the Implementation Team facilitator;
- Assist departments in selecting their priorities and actions;
- Completing annual reporting/report card;
- Providing presentations and updates to Council;
- Tracking progress of actions;
- Developing partnerships and aligning partners with actions;

- Working with communications on the promotion and communication of partners, actions or initiatives through social media, the website, or media and;
- Acting as collaborator and connector of actions within the City.

Partnerships

For actions that affect our neighbouring municipalities and organizations outside the City, we must strive to work together in a collaborative fashion. Together, we will need to establish appropriate and effective partnerships and processes for coordinating the implementation of these actions.

4 Ongoing Communication and Engagement

Engagement and Awareness

The development of the Strategic Plan was founded in extensive community engagement efforts (See Appendix A for full details).

Many of Cambridge's residents, employers and visitors took the time to share their ideas and contribute to the Plan's development. As such, in the interest of maintaining momentum and demonstrating accountability, the City will endeavor to provide regular updates to all interested stakeholders on its implementation.

5 Monitoring and Tracking

Annual Reporting

The collective results of community actions and implementation progress will be shared with the community and City Council annually through a "Report Card" which reports on the results of the Plan, shares significant successes, and evaluates performance against goals and objectives for each focus area of this plan. This will be aided by the development and monitoring of "Key Performance Indicators" or KPIs, that will help show how the city is working towards the community vision.

Reports to Council

To maintain momentum in implementation, and keep the Strategic Plan top-of-mind, all Staff Reports to Council should demonstrate alignment with the Strategic Plan. To this end, a new staff report template will be developed that ensures the connection between all projects and the strategic plan is clearly defined.

Plan Review

There is recognition that the plan needs to provide direction, but that there should also be appropriate opportunities to review and revise the plan accordingly. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed during each term of Council, ideally within the first year of a new Council term. This will allow an opportunity to review and assess the progress of the plan, as well as provide Council with an opportunity to review the existing context and any changes to community priorities.

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