

**To:** COUNCIL

**Meeting Date:** 5/9/2023

**Subject:** Development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

**Submitted By:** Cheryl Zahnleiter, Deputy City Manager Corporate Enterprise

**Prepared By:** Jenna Brown-Jowett, Director of Corporate Strategy

**Report No.:** 23-034-CRE

**File No.:** C11

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

THAT Report 23-034 (Development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan) be received;  
AND THAT Council endorse the recommended approach for the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### Purpose

- The City's current 2020-23 Strategic Plan is within its final year. With the new term of Council underway, it is time to determine how we will approach the development of the City's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

#### Key Findings

- This report outlines a proposed approach for developing the City's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. This recommended approach centers around keeping the current corporate Mission, Vision and Values and carrying forward the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan key components as the base for the new plan. The intended key outcomes of this approach include the development of implementation and education strategies and tools, as well as an enhanced framework to regularly monitor and report on the Corporation's progress in achieving the planned outcomes of the Strategic Plan.
- Staff are seeking endorsement from Council to proceed with the proposed approach. With this endorsement, we can begin implementation with a targeted completion date of Q1 2024.

## Financial Implications

- Funding for the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan in the amount of \$150,000 was approved as part of the Capital Budgeting process (Capital Project A/00703-20)

## STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

☐ Strategic Action; or

☒ Core Service

**Objective(s):** Not Applicable

**Strategic Action:** Not Applicable

**Program:** Governance

**Core Service:** Strategic Planning

## BACKGROUND:

### Why Strategic Planning is important

Strategic Planning is important because it provides the foundation for decision making, priority setting, and ongoing performance management in order to deliver high-quality public service.

### Summary of the current 2020-23 Strategic Plan

In January 2021, Council approved the updated goals and objectives of the Cambridge Connected Strategic Plan. The plan was developed with considerable community input through Engage Cambridge, online focus groups and outreach. Overall, 2,099 responses were received to inform the direction of the plan.

City Council also approved five public value principles and 13 new strategic actions as part of the final phase of the strategic plan. The strategic actions include six actions that are within the City's mandate to lead, and seven actions which will be achieved in collaboration with other partners and agencies.

The City's current 2020-23 Strategic Plan is in its final year. Since the plan was approved in 2021, it has only had a two-year life cycle and many of its implementation initiatives are multi-year projects which are ongoing today. Further, the timeline for the plan was shortened to re-align our Strategic Planning cycle with the term of Council. With the new term of Council now well underway, it is time to finalize the approach which we will take to develop our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan.

## **Summary of the work to date to develop the next Strategic Plan**

There are significant planning components that need to be undertaken to plan for the development of a new Strategic Plan. To date the following planning work has occurred:

- Development of a draft project charter, which outlines the more detailed scope of the recommended approach.
- An Environmental Scan which included:
  - Continued connections with the local Strategic Planning Network to share best practices and seek out opportunities to align regionally on key planning priorities.
  - Reviewing community engagement survey data from two important Cambridge specific engagement data inputs; the 2022 Cambridge Community Satisfaction Survey and the 2022 Waterloo Region (WR) Community Wellbeing Survey.

There are several key components of the corporate performance management framework already in place that provide a strong foundation for the proposed update to the Strategic Plan. As planning continues, staff will look to build upon these foundations and continue to develop a framework that helps to guide priority setting, decision making, communication on progress, and resource allocation.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Proposed Strategic Planning Process (2024-2026)**

This recommended approach centers around keeping the current corporate Mission, Vision and Values and carrying forward the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan key components as the base for the new Plan. It is proposed that the strategic planning process be completed over the course of four phases; understand and align, collaborate and create, build for success and enable. Each of these phases will include consultation and engagement with the two primary stakeholder groups (Council and the Corporation), with key engagements planned with the Community, Advisory Groups and community partners/agencies. Staff are fortunate to begin the planning process with a strong data set of community member engagement input based on in-depth consultations. Included in these consultations are the 2022 Community Satisfaction Survey and 2022 WR Community Wellbeing Survey as well as extensive feedback collected during the 2022 election by members of Council and their ongoing conversations with their constituents.

It is intended that the process be collaborative, iterative and flexible to ensure maximum relevance, responsiveness and transparency.

## **The key components of the recommended approach**

Phase 1 (understand and align) – Understanding where we have been and where we want to go

Timeline: January 2023- May 2023

While much of the foundation is already in place, there is a need to “set the stage” for this new strategic planning process, especially with members of Council and the Corporation. This phase has been underway since the beginning of the year as foundational work for the 2024-2026 project plan, and several steps are already complete. It is important to understand what progress we have made on our current Strategic Plan, to determine what projects and initiatives will carry forward into future years. This work will also include the initial research and investigation of a longer-range business plan, which when in place in future years, will allow us to sequence projects and initiatives over the life of the Strategic Plan. This will assist the Corporation in resource allocation and prioritization as well as providing the Community with a roadmap of strategic projects and initiatives they will see the City implement in the years ahead. The key components in this phase are:

1. Understand current Strategic Plan performance
2. Council workshop #1 (took place on April 3, 2023)
  - Orientation to our current Strategic Plan
3. Council report on proposed 2024-2026 Strategic Plan approach
4. Finalize scope
5. Development of an engagement strategy
6. Scoping of longer-range business plan

Phase 2 (collaborate and create) – Understanding what’s missing

Timeline: June 2023- August 2023

In this phase we will use insights from Council as well as previously gathered feedback from our Community to critically reflect on our current Plan, review the elements that would be carried forward to the new Plan, and identify any gaps. The gap and needs analysis workshop will also help to inform our Business Planning process for 2024, identifying key needs that could be addressed through the execution of initiatives and projects as we plan for and allocate resources to the important work that needs to happen in the coming year. The key components of this phase are:

1. Council workshop #2 (proposed in June 2023)
  - Gap analysis
2. Council report

3. Project kick-off
4. Staff, Council and Advisory Committee consultation
  - Requirements gathering to create education and resources for Strat Plan adoption
5. Business plan process and guidebook development for staff

Phase 3 (build for success) –Understanding how we can more effectively measure and report on our progress and share this with the community

Timeline: September 2023- January 2024

This phase involves the development of tools, materials and processes that will advance how we deliver, measure, report and communicate our progress, both internally and externally. The key components of this phase are:

1. Reporting framework
  - Success measures, and outcome metrics/targets
2. Council Workshop #4
  - Measures of success
3. Implementation plan
4. Communication plan
5. Launch & education plans
6. Strategic Plan document update and strategy on a page visual
7. Council report and approval of 2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Phase 4 (enable) – Ensuring the successful implementation and adoption of the Plan

Timeline: February 2024

In this phase we will support Council, staff, the Community and our community partners/agencies with a phased launch and education roll-out to ensure a successful adoption of our updated Strategic Plan. These key stakeholders will be introduced to the Plan as well as tools that will support enhanced alignment, communication and understanding of the Plan and the role each stakeholder plays in the successful progression and delivery of it. In this phase we will also implement monitoring and reporting of the Plan. The key components of this phase are:

1. Launch and a phased education/training roll-out
2. Communications
3. Monitoring and reporting roll-out begins

## **Council Engagement Plan**

In this proposed approach, City Council will be engaged at key points throughout the process, including:

- Gap analysis workshop in June where the objective will be to make any required modifications to the key components and structure of the current plan, to carry forward in the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan. A subsequent staff report will follow seeking endorsement of the updated key components.
- An educational strategy development workshop in August where the objective will be to gather input that will inform the development of tools, templates and material which will more effectively support Council in communicating and championing the Strategic Plan as well as tools that support enhanced alignment, decision making and prioritization of resources.
- A reporting framework development workshop in the fall where the objective will be to enhance our current performance management structure to identify how we will define, measure and report on the progress of our next Strategic Plan. This will be accompanied by a staff report requesting endorsement of the reporting framework.

City Council will be the final decision-making authority for the Strategic Plan.

## **The key benefits of the recommended approach**

There are a number of benefits to the recommended approach for the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan outlined in this report. This recommended approach centers around keeping the current corporate Mission, Vision and Values and carrying forward the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan key components as the base for the new Plan. The new Plan would also reflect any additional components identified through various forms of engagement and the gap analysis workshop. This approach would concentrate efforts over the term of the Plan to deliver on priorities that continue to be identified as key areas of resident concern and interest. There are significant benefits to this approach, including, but not limited to the following:

- Consultant time and costs will be concentrated on elements around implementation and measures of success (including the facilitation of the gap analysis workshop and the development of a reporting framework).
- The nearly 2,000 combined responses from the 2022 Cambridge Community Satisfaction and WR Community Wellbeing Survey data support the current strategic goals, objectives and actions as being continued priorities for the Community.

- Our Community has had the opportunity to inform the Plan and provide feedback on areas of focus and now we believe the best use of our resources is to fully deliver on the promise we made.
- Carrying forward elements from the current Plan provides more time to address the enduring priorities. Our 2020-2023 Plan has only had a two-year life cycle as it was not launched until 2021. Early 2023 strategic initiative progress reporting suggests that we will have projects and initiatives which will be carried over into 2024 as many of them are multi-year projects.
- Our current environment is rapidly changing with new developments such as Bill 23 and the ongoing review of governance, decision-making, and service delivery functions within the two-tier structure.
- The recommended approach allows the City to concentrate on the undeveloped elements in its Strategic Planning framework, including, detailed implementation planning, the development of an enhanced reporting framework, communication and an educational support structure.

#### **EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):**

There is no existing policy/by-law.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Funding for the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan in the amount of \$150,000 was approved as part of the Capital Budgeting process (Capital Project A/00703-20)

#### **PUBLIC VALUE:**

The Strategic Plan provides the framework for the City to identify priorities, make progress and evaluate outcomes. The strategic planning process allows all stakeholders to contribute to, understand and play a role in achieving the vision expressed by our community.

The Strategic Plan contributes to the five public values principles in the following ways:

- Sustainability – by providing a strategic perspective on the activities of the City, the Strategic Plan helps the organization align internal and external priorities, resources and planning activities. This includes financial resources and staff time – helping us to better understand how the City can support and make progress on the areas where there is the highest need or focus.

- Leadership –the Strategic Plan is a critical piece that helps leadership to align and act on priorities in the City – always keeping the community at the forefront.
- Collaboration – the Strategic Plan allows us to find common areas of interest across departments, divisions and with all our community partners. It helps us understand how we can better work together to accomplish common goals. It also can help us define how we can be most effective as part of partnerships and collaborative efforts.
- Transparency – the Strategic Plan provides clear direction that the community and organization can use to measure progress. Reporting on the activities of the City as they relate to the Strategic Plan also ensures accountability of the organization.
- Engagement – hearing and checking in with our community, stakeholders and partners at regular intervals is an important part of the keeping the Strategic Plan alive, relevant and fresh. It also means that we can demonstrate how this feedback continues to shape the direction and key actions of the City.

#### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:**

Advisory Committees will be engaged and consulted during the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, as outlined in detail within the analysis section.

#### **PUBLIC INPUT:**

Public input has and will continue to be sought at key points during the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, as outlined in detail within the analysis section.

#### **INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

Internal and external consultation is critical to the success of strategic planning.

Council, staff, community members, Advisory Committees and partners will be engaged and consulted during the development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, as outlined in detail within the analysis section.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The recommended approach to develop the new Corporate Strategic Plan for the City of Cambridge is a timely process that will support decision making on many fronts. It will coordinate, focus and align the desired results from our stakeholders, including our Community, Council, staff, volunteers and our partners and other agencies in the Community. While this report outlines a basic approach, it is expected that future details will be refined as part of the governance model and subsequent stakeholder consultation process.

If Council endorses this approach, work to initiate the process will begin immediately and staff will return to Council at various intervals to provide updates.

**REPORT IMPACTS:**

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

**APPROVALS:**

**This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:**

**Director**

**Deputy City Manager**

**Chief Financial Officer**

**City Solicitor**

**City Manager**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Not Applicable