

Staff Report

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Report To: Special General Government Committee

Date of Meeting: November 24, 2023

Report Number: CAO-020-23

Reviewed By: Mary-Anne Dempster, CAO

Resolution#:

File Number:

By-law Number:

Report Subject: 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

Recommendations:

1. That Report CAO-020-23 and any related delegations or communication items, be received;
2. That Council endorse the 2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan, attached to Report CAO-020-23, as Attachment 2;
3. That staff be directed to implement the Plan and report on progress annually;
4. That Council direct staff to develop a performance measurement framework that will support the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and
5. That all interested parties listed in Report CAO-020-23 and any delegations be advised of Council's decision.

Report Overview

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, which includes a Vision, Mission, Strategic Pillars, Expected Results, Priorities and Actions.

This plan will guide the Municipality of Clarington's priorities over the next four years and is the product of extensive community engagement.

1. Background

- 1.1 Undertaking a strategic planning process at the beginning of each Council term is a foundational part of good governance.
- 1.2 A strategic plan acts as a guiding document that sets the vision and priorities of the community it serves. Once endorsed by Council, it becomes the responsibility of the staff team to operationalize and deliver on the priorities identified.
- 1.3 [Report CAO-005-23](#) provided Council with a high-level close-out report about the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan (as approved by the previous Council). The report included notable achievements as well as items for future consideration, which were helpful to inform priorities during the planning sessions for the new strategic plan.
- 1.4 To ensure that a strategic plan is impactful and reflective, it is critical that the community, Council, and staff is engaged and involved throughout the process.

2. Strategic Plan Development

Phase 1: Preparing the draft

- 2.1 In January of this year, the CAO's Office began the work to facilitate the development of a strategic plan for this term of Council. The first step was to meet with the Mayor and Members of Council to understand their priorities and what they hoped to see accomplished by the end of the term. Meetings took place in early 2023 and provided valuable insight.

- 2.2 In a public survey, the community was asked to help inform the creation of the draft plan. The survey was open from February 21 to March 10, 2023 and 790 responses were received.
- 2.3 The top five priorities of the community identified were:
- a. Population growth/urbanization
 - b. Development/urban sprawl
 - c. Affordability/cost of living
 - d. Traffic management
 - e. Taxes/user fees
- 2.4 The results of the public survey as well as the comments from Mayor and Councillor interviews were [presented](#) as the basis for discussion during the April 27, 2023 Special General Government Committee meeting.
- 2.5 Council worked collaboratively with senior staff during the April 27, 2023 meeting to refine the results and determine areas of focus. Staff used the information from the meeting to create a [draft strategic plan](#) that was presented to Council on May 31, 2023.

Phase Two: Refining and enhancing the draft strategic plan

- 2.6 Over the course of the late summer and fall, and with the support of Planning Solutions Inc., staff rolled out a robust public engagement campaign to ensure that the draft strategic plan was reflective of the priorities of the community. The engagement work centered around the question of, “Did we get it right?”, and also provided an opportunity to identify any gaps.
- 2.7 An online survey was hosted on the newly launched Clarington Connected platform from August 1 to October 9, 2023. The survey was heavily promoted through social media, traditional print media, radio and in the What’s Up in Clarington newsletter. Staff also deployed kiosks, branded under the Clarington Connected banner in several community centres. The survey was also shared by departments with their respective stakeholders and committees. Staff were pleased with the level of uptake (1,678 respondents – a 112% increase from the initial survey).
- 2.8 In-person engagement sessions were held in Newcastle, Bowmanville (hybrid), Orono and Courtice. All engagement sessions were facilitated by Planning Solutions Inc., a respected firm based in Durham Region with extensive facilitation expertise as well as

strategic plan development. The firm has supported the development of strategic plans throughout Durham Region and beyond.

- 2.9 In total, 27 individuals participated in four engagement sessions. Each in-person and virtual session provided attendees with an opportunity to learn about the strategic planning process and the details of the draft Strategic Plan. The sessions provided a forum to ask questions and seek feedback on the draft. The in-person sessions provided the opportunity to spend more time with a focused group of individuals, enabling insightful, fulsome, and meaningful conversations and connections, resulting in additional quality feedback being collected.
- 2.10 Staff engagement sessions were also held to ensure that those ultimately responsible for delivering on the plan, many of whom are also residents, were aligned and had an additional forum for input. Over 65 staff participated in these sessions, with representation from across the corporation. A staff-specific survey was also undertaken and received 165 responses.
- 2.11 Attachment 1 includes a high-level summary report from Planning Solutions Inc., outlining engagement specifics, general observations and recommendations for enhancements to the final strategic plan.

3. Enhancing the Draft Strategic Plan

- 3.1 The two phases of extensive community engagement ensure that the final Strategic Plan is reflective of both Council and the community's collective aspirations.
- 3.2 Feedback collected has played a pivotal role in shaping the final Strategic Plan. Several enhancements have been made to reflect the valuable input and recommendations from the community, Council, and staff. The enhancements were carefully undertaken to ensure the essence and interest of the initial draft was maintained. It is important to note that there was no critical misalignment between the early draft and the feedback received. At a high-level, the enhancements were centred around:
- Adjustments to wording to ensure actionable and measurable language is used.
 - Several items were pulled up a level to reflect their strategic nature (moving from a workplan to a strategic plan) or re-organized to align more accurately based on common Expected Results.
 - Created categories of Expected Results, Priorities, and Actions, which are reflective of best practice. The categories also instill accountability for delivery and provide the ability to measure progress.
 - Modifications to address key issues raised by both staff and the community.

- 3.3 74.69% agreed with the draft Vision. Survey respondents identified an opportunity for minor enhancements: a reference to connected and re-wording “honouring our past” to “respecting our past.” These enhancements are reflected in the updated Vision: *A connected, dynamic and welcoming community, focused on the future while respecting the past.*
- 3.4 81.82% agreed with the draft Mission. The Mission has been retained from the original draft: *To enhance the quality of life in our community.*
- 3.5 The three Pillars were re-worded to more accurately reflect the Priorities and Actions underneath them. They are:

Draft	Enhanced
Service Excellence	Lead (Exceptional Municipal Services and Governance)
Planning for the Future	Grow Responsibly (Resilient, Sustainable and Complete Community)
Vibrant and Inclusive Community	Connect (Safe, Diverse, Inclusive and Vibrant Community)

4. Final Strategic Plan and Implementation

- 4.1 The 2024-27 Strategic Plan will guide Council decisions and administrative actions for the next four years and beyond. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be led by Clarington’s Senior Leadership Team. Clarington staff will ensure that workplans align with the Strategic Plan, and actions contribute towards achieving expected results. Many actions outlined in this plan require partnership with not only the Region of Durham, provincial and federal governments; but also local stakeholders, community groups, businesses and schools.
- 4.2 The Senior Leadership Team and a larger working group will develop clear performance measures that will support the implementation of the Strategic Plan. A report outlining the performance measurement framework will be brought to Council in 2024.
- 4.3 An annual progress report will highlight accomplishments for each Pillar and provide updates on progress at the action level. The annual report will also provide an

opportunity to articulate why certain actions may not be on track or why certain measures of progress have not been achieved.

- 4.4 It is vital that the implementation of the Strategic Plan not solely be measured according to tangible data. The Strategic Plan process was rooted in deep and meaningful engagement with the community, and staff will continue ongoing conversations and engagement. Both Council and the community will be updated on our progress, challenges and successes.

5. Financial Considerations

- 5.1 All proposed Actions within the Strategic Plan have been reviewed to ensure they have been considered in the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget.

6. Concurrence

- 6.1 This report has been reviewed by the Deputy CAO/Treasurer who concurs with the recommendations.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is respectfully recommended that Council endorse the 2024-27 Strategic Plan and direct staff to report back on progress.

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Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Engagement Summary Report

Attachment 2 – 2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan