

Staff Report

Report To: Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee
Report From: Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness
Meeting Date: November 13, 2024
Report Code: CM-24-040
Subject: Vision 2050 – November 2024 Update

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-24-040 respecting Vision 2050 – November 2024 Update, the Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to include a Business Case for \$100,000 for the initial implementation of the Strategic Plan in the 2025 Operating Budget.

Highlights:

- The Future Owen Sound—Vision 2050 survey resulted in nearly 1,000 surveys completed and more than 5,000 qualitative responses recorded
- The survey findings confirmed a strong alignment with the previous strategic plan priorities but provided additional definition criteria as well as two new strategic pillars.
- The seven strategic pillars which are the focus of the visioning sessions are: Fostering Mutually Beneficial and Respectful Relationships, Celebrating and Embracing Culture, Safe City, Prosperous City, Green and Resilient City, A City That Moves and City Building

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Clear Direction.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[CM-23-020 Long-Term Strategic Plan Introduction](#)

[CM-24-004 Proposed Community Engagement Plan for the Development of the Strategic Plan](#)

[CM-24-008 Vision 2050 – Lessons Learned to Date March 2024](#)

[CM-24-017 Vision 2050 – Work Plan and May 2024 Update](#)

[CM-24-033 Vision 2050 – Phase 1 Update](#)

Background:

In September, report CM-24-033 Vision 2050—Phase1 Update detailed the outreach tactics and demographics of survey respondents for the Future 2050 Survey.

The Future Vision 2050 survey was designed to engage a diverse range of Owen Sound community stakeholders. It was provided in both a digital and paper-based format, including a special three-question children’s survey.

Jay Pitter Placemaking worked with community stakeholders, business leaders, educational partners and social service organizations to amplify the survey. This resulted in nearly 1,000 surveys completed and more than 5,000 qualitative responses recorded, including an impressively diverse demographic reach. Responses were received from a diversity of income ranges, with one third of respondents identifying as being from an equity-deserving group.

Analysis:

Survey Report Highlights and Findings

A comparative review of other recent Owen Sound-related survey data complemented the survey analysis. This included reviewing documents such as the City of Owen Sound’s 2021 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, the 2022 Owen Sound Police Service Community Survey and the 2022 Vital Focus on Housing report.

Qualitative responses were analyzed and grouped into common themes, which included, among others, addressing issues related to poverty, homelessness, drug use and fostering safer spaces; encouraging economic development; building on an already vibrant arts and culture scene; ensuring the city's natural spaces and streetscapes are clean, beautiful and lively; and addressing congestion and multi-modal transportation options.

The survey findings confirmed a strong alignment with the previous strategic plan priorities but provided additional definition criteria as well as two new strategic pillars: Fostering Mutually Beneficial and Respectful Relationships and Celebrating and Embracing Culture. Previous strategic pillars that remained were Safe City, Prosperous City, Green and Resilient City, A City That Moves and City Building.

Community Engagement Capacity-Building Workshop Overview

Two community engagement capacity-building sessions were led by Jay Pitter. The morning session was attended by City Councillors and staff from Owen Sound and eight surrounding municipalities. The session was extraordinarily well received. Ms. Pitter unpacked the definition of holistic and comprehensive community engagement, highlighting the importance of going well beyond gathering feedback and embracing a co-creation approach. She also shared inclusive and creative community engagement principles, followed by 15+ community engagement barriers and tangible accommodations for addressing them. Ms. Pitter then highlighted 10 examples of inclusive and creative community engagement, directly taken from her practice portfolio, featuring multiple cities across North America. She stressed the importance of both coding and translating community engagement inputs and walked the group through the steps using a real-world example. Municipal attendees commented that the session was challenging, aspirational and pragmatic in a way that directly responded to their daily contexts. The evening session for community stakeholders included a similar context, and the response following that workshop was also positive.

Future Owen Sound—Vision 2050, Strategic Planning Sessions

Registration for the upcoming Future Owen Sound—Vision 2050, Strategic Planning Sessions is well underway. A media release has been disseminated and a broad range and large number of community stakeholders have been notified across various platforms. The outreach has been explicit about welcoming participation from community stakeholders, including, but not

limited to, young families, business leaders and not-for-profit sector professionals. Each strategic planning session will be guided by a local community co-facilitator, which is aligned with Jay Pitter Placemaking's practice model.

The community engagement co-facilitators for the strategic planning sessions are especially qualified. They work across large institutional and grassroots contexts, and have experience in leading local, regional and international community engagement processes. To provide each local community engagement co-facilitator with adequate support and to extend the impact of this work, Jay Pitter Placemaking partnered with the University of Toronto Urban Studies Program. Next-generation urban planners and place-makers have supported the project through research contributions (finding precedents/examples that may be applicable to Owen Sound's strategic priorities and context), and they will also be present to provide support at the strategic planning sessions.

The format for each strategic planning session is as follows:

- Prior to the strategic planning sessions, develop and disseminate Informed Community Engagement Briefs—a concept originated by Jay Pitter Placemaking, which proactively presents issues, facts and precedents/examples—to ensure that community engagement processes are thoughtful and productive;
- Prior to the strategic planning sessions, host two meetings with community co-facilitators and University of Toronto planning students to review the session framework, receive suggestions and answer questions;
- Welcome and Land Reflection;
- Introduction of consultant and outline of the session expectations and agenda;
- Introduction of community co-facilitator and creative engagement activity;
- Together with community stakeholders, collectively identify immediate-, mid-, and long-term actions;
- Together with community stakeholders, identify community-based institutions and individuals with the expertise (and, in some instances, the mandate) to support the implementation of collectively identified actions;

- Together with community stakeholders, identify areas of growth or capacity building required to effectively implement collectively identified actions;
- Brief strategic planning session evaluation.

This comprehensive strategic planning process is intended to form the basis of an action-oriented and deeply collaborative Future Owen Sound—Vision 2050 Strategic Plan.

Timeline of the remainder of the project

- November 8–10, 2024: Strategic Planning Sessions and consecutive online feedback period
- Mid-December 2024: Draft Vision 2050 document submitted for review
- January 2025: Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee meeting to review draft Vision 2050 document
- Mid-January 2025: Draft Vision 2050 document submitted to City Council
- February 2025: Revisions to Vision 2050 document
- March 2025: Final Vision 2050 document submitted

Looking Forward to Implementation in 2025

Although there are many months to go until the Final Vision 2050 document is submitted to Council for consideration, the development of the 2025 Operating Budget is currently well underway. To ensure the momentum of the highly successful comprehensive, inclusive, and community-centred approach to developing Vision 2050, it is imperative that funds are identified to begin the implementation once the strategic plan is finalized. Jay Pitter Placemaking has devised a strategic planning process that includes a two-fold identification of resources for implementation. Each strategic planning session prompts community-based institutions and individuals with the expertise (and, in some instances, the mandate) to support the implementation of collectively identified actions. Also, the strategic plan itself will identify possible funding sources for the implementation of collectively identified actions. The above actions are intended to ensure that the City is well supported in implementing the collectively identified actions. However, it is imperative and common good practice for municipalities to establish the financial foundation for the implementation of strategic plans. This is done by proactively allocating funds for core actions. Doing so is one of the three primary pillars of successful strategic planning.

Financial Implications:

The approved capital budget for developing the Vision 2050 strategic plan is \$100,000, and the project remains within budget.

Currently, no specific operating dollars are dedicated to implementing strategic priorities. Upon approval of the business case as part of the operating budget consideration, \$100,000 will be allocated to implement any immediate actions identified within the Vision 2050 strategic plan.

Communication Strategy:

A robust communications plan was developed early in Phase 1 and will continue to be used throughout the future phases.

Consultation:

This report was developed in collaboration with Jay Pitter Placemaking.

Attachments:

Future Owen Sound – Vision 2050 Survey Report

Recommended by:

Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness, at mpalmer@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1246.